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Three Poems by A.E. :

THE FOUNTAINS.

That wild rose blossom
In sunlight or moonlight,
A fountain of its own beauty,
From hollow to height
Casts up its winged airy petals—
Transfigured light.

It shapes its delicate images
In light that all may see.
East, west, on height, in hollow,
Wherever eyes may be
The vain lovely prodigal
Will give itself to thee.

O'er every bloom a nimbus
Of its own beauty rayed.
None by another's glory
Was cast into the shade.
It seemed the hollow of heaven
For each alone was made.

Wonder ! Wonder ! Wonder !
I saw in vision there
Myriads of fairy fountains
That cast upon the air
Their foam of phantom blossoms,
Upon the mystic air.

What could that light so laden
Be but the thought of One,
That to the heaven of heavens
Can in an instant run,
Bearing that myriad beauty
Wider than moon or sun ?

A MOUNTAIN TARN.

The pool glowed to a magic cauldron
 O'er which I bent alone.
 The sun burned fiercely on the water,
 The setting sun,
 A madness of fire : around it
 A dark glory of stone.

O mystic fire !
 Stillness of earth and air !
 That burning silence I
 For an instant share.
 In the crystal of quiet I gaze
 And the god is there.

Within that loneliness
 What multitude !
 In the silence what ancient promise
 Again renewed !
 Then the wonder goes from the stones,
 The lake and the shadowy wood.

CABARET NEW YORK.

The wave of life breaks there in froth,
 A golden turbulence, and there
 Proud boys, their thoughts gilded and gay,
 Dance with their women light as air.

What Thought digs wide the pit of space ?
 What Will keeps the fierce stars apart ?
 What Titans build the dancing floor
 For that soft indolence of heart ?

While magic trifles, lips and eyes,
 Shine at me through the wandering glow,
 My heart feels moving in its deeps
 The Great Deep's tidal underflow.

Three Poems by Padraic Fallon :

ETAIN.

When gaps were green I welcomed through my hedges
 Soft-stepping women to my grassy mind
 And thought from that bright flock I'd learn the wisdom
 Uddered in stars that pasture in the wind.

Now I have eaten of the bitter fish,
 The foolish things that housed my dream in lust
 Come to me crying out of some dark rapture
 As though another salmon starred their dusk.

I live again the wanton days when I
 Measured the miles of Ireland by the inns
 Of drinking as a sailor of the seas
 The wild equation of his ports and sins.

I love again the women who drew me down
 To hedgelove when the stars groped in grass—O blown
 Out were the stars when curling from wet shadow
 The white haunch glittered like a dew-drowned moon.

Here in this sleepy field all day while sun
 Was suckled in summer, from hot crown to toes
 I am grown like the sun, a golden bee
 In a drunken summer that no cuckoo knows.

Now Dark, that ancient otter with the moon
 Fishtailing in his teeth drips out, cold grace
 Suddenly falls about me, and softly rising I
 Behold the rainy glory of your face.

THE FOOL.

Grass-people from their greenhouses
 Came up to take the air
 When the dewlights were dropping ;
 Cold Quiet grew into my ear,
 Tall grasses grew up through my hair ;
 Through the dewlights dropping
 Was many a silver and dark stair
 Where stars came drifting down from the air.

The small grass-people did not talk
 At all to me ; On each long stalk
 One sat without a stir
 Staring at a dewdrop there
 That had entrapped a wandering star ;
 Each sat without a stir
 Watching a light, brightfooted thing
 Pondering, pondering.

I shouted for I could not bear
 The quiet pale dewdropping air,
 The pointed faces pondering ;
 A dizzy wind and a crooked moon
 Came blowing through my airy swoon,
 I heard a host of little voices sing
 " Alas for the wind O the bitter wind
 That blows the bright wits out of the mind."

NOMADS.

In the starry dusk
 By the green roadside
 We tent, we light a bright woodfire.
 The roads go four
 Far ways to the tide
 Yet the farmer goes from pillow to byre.

When the silver urn
 Of the Lightbringer, borne
 Over the dim fields, upturns afloat,
 We go the far ways
 Awheel while the haze
 Of larksong trembles from the dawns white throat.

We are first at the fair,
 O serf do you stare
 On our slender limbs and faces wild with sun,
 Ears hooped with red gold,
 Pale smiles under cold
 Coiled eyes that are older than Solomon ?

Though you pit guile to guile
 We take tithe of your reaping
 Inevitably as the wind and rain
 Unfettered by terror of
 Dark rookeries of clergy
 Or that pale Body on the red rood of pain.

And secretly, swiftly,
 We are gone from your white gate
 As the swallows from your eaves sink south on a wind
 A thousand wild miles
 In a round cold eye
 Old gardens and gables of Asia in the mind.

But, O Bond of a parish !
 We leave on your dish
 Where we dipped in, a curse on your big sons and daughters,
 Forgetting the soft herds
 Their thoughts are on dark birds
 Soaring over green counties and sounding blue waters.

THE NEWER ATOMISM

By William Robert Fearon

WHETHER it be, as Bergson has suggested, "that the human intellect feels at home among inanimate objects"; whether it be that all men are builders at heart; whether it be that there is a dark satisfaction in pulverising gods and heroes, atomistic philosophy has never lacked apostles.

Even in an age when the structure of civilisation creaks and shudders, when the imperishable atom, itself, has been shattered, this aristocratic form of thought persists, confused, perhaps, but unconfounded.

It is an ancient philosophy, at least as old as the Indian records of 1200 B.C., but its charter can scarcely be traced back beyond the early Greek metaphysicians. To Leucippus is attributed the credit of having invented the ideal atom, although there is some reason to believe that Leucippus himself may be an invention of some later philosopher anxious to surrogate the responsibility for a dangerous doctrine. The speculation became a theory in the hands of Democritus, and found its way into the literature of the world through the voice of the Latin poet Lucretius.

"According to convention," declared Democritus, "there is a sweet and a bitter, a hot and a cold, and according to convention there is colour. In truth there are only atoms and a void." Thus was the doctrine of *atomism* introduced into Greek philosophy during the lifetime of Socrates. The poetic imagination was quick to see the tremendous implications of this conception:

*Gods in their nature of themselves subsist
'Tis certain, nor may ought their peace molest
For ever, unconcerned with our affairs
And far remote, void of or grief or cares,
Need not our service, swim in full content,
Nor our good works accept, nor bad resent.*

(*De Rerum Natura*. Evelyn's translation).

Democritus showed great skill in constructing his atomic model of the universe, and in explaining the different properties of matter. In liquids, such as water, the constituent atoms were assumed to be polished spheres able to flow past one another.

In metals, such as iron, the atoms were rough and adhesive, and became entangled so as to form a solid. By a slight change in nomenclature, substituting *molecule* for *atom*, and introducing the concept of a *force of cohesion*, the theory can be applied to-day to explain the difference between matter in the solid and the liquid state. In an age when the experimental method was undeveloped the physical aspect of atomism was neglected, and remained a philosophic curiosity until, nearly two thousand years later, it was revived by Newton and by Boyle, and, finally, in 1803, set on a firm basis by Dalton, who showed that all chemical changes were atomic in character.

Since then, the atomic theory of matter has remained unshaken, although the atoms be blasted to the winds by physicists or denied out of all existence by the followers of Mrs. Eddy.

Again, atomism has been important in the development of celestial mechanics since the days of Laplace, and it forms the basis of the modern mechanical conceptions of cosmic evolution. Hence, in two great departments of knowledge this speculation has borne fruit. But there is another aspect of the subject that is more disquieting and, since it hardly can be tested experimentally, more popular among makers of controversy, and that is what might be termed *metaphysical atomism*. According to Democritus, the soul of man is atomic in character; a fortuitous aggregation of particles akin to those of fire and light. And, furthermore, the world wherein man dwells and the heaven to which he aspires are equally the "pattern of chance," a haphazard design in the infinite kaleidoscope.

Metaphysical atomism languished during the period of the sophists and Socrates, and was completely overshadowed by the great systems of Plato and Aristotle, who, in the words of Goethe, "divided mankind, so to speak, between them." It reappeared, however, during the Renaissance as an historic form of atheism, and began to attract the attention of European theologians. The subject was summarised at considerable length by Ralph Cudworth, the Cambridge Platonist, who, in 1678, published his *True Intellectual System of the Universe*. He traced atomism back to the time of Moses, and amassed so much material for refutation that he was almost entombed in his erudition, and justified Dryden's criticism: "He has raised such objections against the being of a God and Providence that many think he has not answered them."

It is doubtful if metaphysical atomism can be overthrown by controversy. Directly a defect is found in the structure, a newer type of atom is invented having the necessary qualities latent in it.

For example, Leibnitz concluded that the ultimate reality of substance could only be conceived as force, and set out to construct a monadology of highly endowed and, perhaps, highly artificial units or *monads*. Fechner, the experimental psychologist, accepted the concept of the reality of force, and resolved his world into punctal centres or points of application of attractions and repulsions, force, itself, being the only inevitable law in the universe. Thus, at a time when physicists and chemists were discovering and tabulating the proportion of material atoms the ideal atom of the philosophers was being made more and more unlike its physical counterpart :

It seems probable to me that God, in the beginning, formed matter in solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, moveable particles, of such size and figures, with such other properties, and in such proportions to space, as most conduced to the end for which He formed them.

The words are those of Isaac Newton ; they might equally well have been those of Democritus or of any pious Victorian physicist, fourteen hundred years later. But the end of the age was at hand. The adamant particle did not outlast the nineteenth century. In 1895, Röntgen discovered the X-rays ; a year later, Becquerel discovered the property known as radioactivity, and, in 1898, Madam Curie isolated the salt of a strange element, radium, the morning star of the new century. So far from being "solid, hard, impenetrable particles," the atoms of radium were continually crumbling away, spontaneously evolving energy in the process.

From the ashes of the old theory arose, phoenix-like, the epicyclic atom of to-day ; a central nucleus girt by spinning electrons ; a universe in miniature. An appropriate epitaph is that pronounced by Jean Perrin, the French physicist :

Atoms are no longer eternal, indivisible entities, setting a limit to the possible by their irreducible simplicity ; inconceivably minute though they be, we are beginning to see in them a vast host of new worlds. . . . Nature reveals the

same wide grandeur in the atom and the nebula, and each new aid to knowledge shows her vaster and more diverse, more fruitful and more unexpected, and above all, unfathomably immense.

The effect of these new discoveries on philosophic atomism was not realised for some time. Physicists were too busy making discoveries, and metaphysicians were still suffering from the fire and smoke of the great controversies on evolution, shortly to be revived by the rediscovery, in 1900, of Mendel's neglected work on heredity.

At first it was believed that the solid atom in its downfall had destroyed the foundations of materialism. This was proclaimed by the late Sir William Barrett, in an almost forgotten address delivered at the Kensington in London, and printed in *The Quest* (July, 1910):

Even the atoms themselves are no longer, as Lucretius and his successors thought, "strong in their solid singleness," but have vanished into congeries of electrons. Hence the crude materialistic view of the universe, with all its arrogant assumptions, instead of being a popular, has become a damaged and more or less discredited theory. . . . Further, all manifestations of physical energy are due to the operation of an inscrutable force overcoming an inscrutable resistance. . .

Far behind—and the source of all tangible matter—lies the unseen, intangible, incomprehensible *Ether*; and behind—and the source of all physical energy—lies an unseen, all-pervasive and incomprehensible *Force*.

Here, Barrett bombards the atomists with their own ammunition, and drives them from the field—to his satisfaction. The assumption, which is still wide-spread, simplifies itself into the comfortable belief that a dynamic atom is more likely to be controlled by mind than is a solid atom; just as a wasp's nest is more responsive than a coconut of the same shape. An equally naive assertion was ascribed to an itinerant lecturer in Dublin, last year, who is recorded as having said that since science had shown that the greater part of an atom was empty space it had disproved the existence of the greater part of matter, though, unfortunately,

not all—as yet. But, however we may regard their structure, stones are still as hard, and roads are still as rough as they were when Democritus sought the things that endure, among the rain-worn hills of Abdera.

There is another edge to the sword of modern physics; it may be directed to the defence of philosophic atomism as well as to its dismemberment. The old-fashioned, solid atom was too hard for the teeth of elderly sages, and was abandoned in favour of a more comfortable particle. But the modern dynamic atom with its infinite possibilities would appear to meet all rational requirements. The extension of the concept of a dynamic atomism to all the fields of experience has not yet, as far as I know, been undertaken by modern philosophy. Mr. R. G. Collingwood suggests it in his *Speculum Mentis*, when he writes:

The individuality of historical facts, we must now say, is not systematic but atomic. Each fact is what it is irrespective of all others. . . . This being so, we can apprehend the atomic facts of history, one by one, and thus build up ever-increasing structures of fact which have nothing to fear from any unrevealed fact that may lurk in the surrounding darkness. Thus the possibility of historical knowledge is saved.

Dynamic atomism was implicit in a theory of pictorial imagination which Dr. W. B. Yeats outlined or, perhaps, improvised for me ten years ago. According to this theory the image forms have a unitary character, and by a process of attraction and repulsion build themselves up into mobile patterns. If an image were held sufficiently long in the mind it drew unto itself other images until aggregates were formed. These, in turn, broke down into sub-groups, some of which repelled each other, and the process continued until a dynamic equilibrium was reached. Not having a strong pictorial imagination, I was unable to test the observation, and I do not know if Dr. Yeats has ever proceeded with the work.

The most recent exposition of dynamic atomism I have come across is in a book by W. Denham Verschoyle, entitled *The Soul of an Atom*, a title that would certainly not have commended itself to Fechner.

The book is largely a survey of atomic mechanics written

from the standpoint of a philosophic engineer rather than a mathematician or a philosopher. Mr. Verschoyle does not appear to be specially interested in the history of atomism and its implications; instead, he seeks to show that the modern dynamic atom provides an explanation of the entire phenomena of existence. Starting from the concept of an epicyclic apparatus, formed of one or more electrons spinning round a nucleus, he sets out to show that "once the electrons are by any means constituted, a universe of some kind must be the result, and it depends on the inhibitory laws which follow from electronic constitution what shall be the nature of the universe."

The process begins with a cloud of electrons assembling in space, and exhibiting in the process three fundamental types of energy-form: aggregational, dispersive, and rotational. Once any form has taken on individuality, special conditions are needed to transmute it. Thus, "nature may be thought of as a complex integration of little mechanical contrivances, the principal functions of which are the emission, reception, transformation, and storing up of energy." By these means the atoms are generated, but, points out the author,

in attempting to define an atomic basis for materiality, it is not enough to advance a hard and fast mechanical conception, which however well it may meet the requirements of the physicist and chemist, still falls short of the total demands that must be made upon it. The same atom and the same way of thought must, when these two departments have finished with them, lead us on without further assumptions into the domains of the biologist and psychologist; for it appears to be certain that only in this way may we hope to follow the methods actually adopted by nature. This can only be done by introducing from the very beginning a sensitising principle. . . .

This "sensitising principle" is located in the conditions governing the energy emission, and is explained by means of analogies drawn from the lighthouse and the gyroscope top.

Next, we have to look for an "elementary life-mechanism" which will function "without invoking the assistance of any law or force not already available." Here I am afraid Mr. Verschoyle reverts to the notion of a biogen unit, "a typical

rotating uniplane material system, composed generally of a great number of molecules—a molecule of molecules, in fact.” Now, the biogen unit has been abandoned in modern biochemistry, largely under the influence of Hopkins. It was unfruitful as a basis for research, and it has been replaced by the group of enzyme-substrate systems which underly the activities of every living cell, and which there is no advantage in regarding as “a molecule of molecules.”

Time went on, and as often happens analogically in human affairs, the partnership was merged into progressive atomic and molecular companies, of an ever increasing size and complexity of organisation. At every stage, however, the functioning of the whole community continued to be divisible into two main categories. . . . until at last, long after the appearance of the first biogen, groups of these having become associated with the principal wants of the community, it devolved upon one such group to act as intermediary to all the rest, and thus initiate internal reflex action and concerted response to external influence.

Thus arose the primitive central nervous system, designed, in time, to become the master tissue of life. The energy emitted by this nervous tissue is elementary thought, which is thus “visualised as a train of wave-energy-forms of the same nature as light, but modulated by the tectonic peculiarities and complex internal motion of the generating mechanism, so that the waves are incomplete and the quanta composed of but a small number of them.”

Mr. Verschoye finds a physical basis for the soul in terms of energetics :

Surrounding every material body in the universe is an energy complex, which under special conditions may assume a permanent static form to which the name “soul” is applicable. In the course of general evolution, characteristics are impressed on this immaterial complex which imparts to it an individuality representative of the material body to which it belongs; and this survives and retains its individuality even after destruction of the material body responsible for its generation and permanent organisation.

The analogy used to explain the formation of an immortal entity is the author's most ingenious contribution to atomism.

When an electron, or a group of electrons, is circulating in a closed curve, such as a circular orbit, it does not radiate energy; and since its energy of motion cannot be annihilated, if undisturbed, it will continue to circulate for ever. Supposing now that the electron or group could suddenly disappear or be withdrawn from the ring-energy-form which it has generated, without disturbing it, this energy-form, like the heat or light waves into which it might easily have been converted, will go on for ever.

That is to say, during the laborious years of earthly life the incessant molecules that compose "this corpse which is man" have set spinning a closed energy-form, a sort of smoke ring in space, capable of surviving the death and dissolution of the physical body that bore it.

Thus Mr. Verschöyle makes atoms of his angels and angels of his atoms, and one of his conclusions, at least, will be acceptable to timid travellers in a stricken age.

The human soul is viewed as a permanent physical reality and, as such, subject to natural law. Its consequent evolutionary progress to some higher state is indicated, but no physical conception of that state is yet possible.

I do not propose to criticise this unusual and stimulating book. Indeed, it is hardly ready for criticism, being in the form of a prolegomena, qualitative rather than quantitative. Dynamic atomism may or may not be true. In its simple presentation I do not see that it meets the difficulties that proved fatal to the older static atomism, namely, the origin of self-knowledge and the freedom of the will.

It may, perhaps, like the older atomism, become a fruitful mother of research, and thus try and prove its tentative conclusions. I indicate one line of many. If human thought be vibrational in character it should be possible by exposing subjects to radiations of the right frequency to demonstrate an effect on the brain. Something of this sort has been claimed by believers in telepathy, but their work is extremely hard to reproduce, and the "thought radiations," if they do exist, arise from another

human mind. Maybe, the dense bone of the cranium acts as a screen to protect the cerebral cortex from such wave-energy-forms as well as from material injuries. The X-rays and diathermy suggest themselves here as instruments of research, and should appeal to the novelist if not to the physiologist. Such considerations, in the words of Sir Thomas Browne, "might admit of a wide solution ; and shall tax hardly the Judgment of Posterity."

¹ The Soul of an Atom. The Physical Basis of Human Survival. By W. D. Verschoyle, M.E., M.I.M.E. (London : The Search Publishing Co., Ltd. 1932. pp. 108 + xii, 9 illustrations. 7s. 6d.)

GRANNY MATZA

(Translated from the Serbian of Velko Petrovitch by Alec Brown)

EVEN Ravangrad (which means the Town of the Plains) was not without that sort of old woman you only call in when there's trouble in the house. The sort that are usually old women of no definite class, that have no family connections, that are gloomy, black, silent fragile and ancient. The young generation has not even any idea where they sprang from, or even their full name, and nobody would ever give them a thought when there are gay doings on, christenings or weddings or household saints. It's only when somebody catches some loathsome disease or dies that they are sent for, sent for post haste to do the bandaging of stinking sore-infested limbs, or to wash infected sheets, or with their dry black fingers to squeeze the lids down over dead eyes, and then sit with the corpse through the long sultry night, breathing the close stink of wax candles beside limbs already flecked with purpling patches, and with faded bunches of greenery driving away the gluttonous flies that fasten in the orbits of the eyes and at the corners of the mouth and inside the yellow nostrils. What is more, those insignificant little figures that busy healthy folk never think of can show all the great constancy and courage of their calling whenever nerves of steel have snapped under family troubles or misfortunes, and the steadiest of us have lost our heads. They know how to take command then. They know everything that our folk for centuries has maintained *is meet* or *is not meet* on this or that occasion, and solemnly, seriously, fearless and frightful, they issue their orders for the punctilious observance of all that ancient ritual of superstition, prejudice and magic, and amid the confusion of the weeping and desolate household they stand shining clear like the ancient priestesses of Ishtar and Proserpine.

They force the lighted candle between the fingers of the departed while those fingers are still warm and trembling; they cover up the looking glasses; they stop the hands of the clocks; and their rule lasts till the bier has borne out its burden of crape and candles, and the house has been aired from attic to cellar, and all the folk back from the graveyard have properly washed their hands. Then, before the wake that we have after the burial is half over, just as the talk turns to questions of inheritance or the morrow's tasks, they withdraw very quietly and disappear with a bundle of the dead one's unwanted clothes and just a little of the funeral eats.

But even among these Granny Matza was humble and retiring. She was wafer baker to the little Chapel of Saint John up by the Shapony estate, where the parson serves only a few times a year—in fact, just as often as any member of the hamlet has his annual household feast.

A little old thing. No, more accurately, shrunk to a little old thing, hunchbacked, wrung to one side, always in a black gown and kerchief out of which peeped a tiny wizened pointed yellow little face. A typical regular church-going old granny of our parts. She rarely came down into the town. There were only a few old families who still remembered that she was quite well born, the daughter of a priest, and called her in when they had trouble. Within that narrow circle she was known as Mrs Matza, because they were always conscious that once upon a time she had been a dignified matron, mother of a large family, too.

She had buried all hers very early, one after the other they had gone ; and now she baked wafers, and was generally known as Old Matza the Wafer-baker—but the mystery was, what did she live on ? But nobody ever enquired into that, though. She did live. When not beside a deathbed or a sickbed she lived in a cottage in the copse beside the Chapel of St John ; lived surrounded by worn-out worm-eaten moth-eaten candle-dripped church candlesticks, banners, chalice-covers and lamps and biers and dusting brooms ; and her food, that birdlike little she ate, consisted of bread and kollivo, that is, our kind of festival frumity, and other meats taken to the graveyard for the souls of the dead, or given to her.

You would see her go through the town all bent up, as if she was concentrated on her own minuteness and insignificance. She never looked to one side or other, and nobody could have told you what she knew—whether she knew anything of the life of the town and its inhabitants and their works—in fact, how far she was still part of this life, still among the living. Her appearance did not even remind you of death, and so it did not even jar at all on happy-go-lucky people who passed her in the street—as, for example, the pale-faced undertaker's man did. She passed through the turgid Ravangrad air softer and more invisible than the transparent Pithian Medusa floating in the waters of the sea. And if she suddenly disappeared nobody would have noticed it—as if she merely had not come back from one of her trips to the graveyard.

But the Great War came to her as well as to anyone else,

and brought her to the common notice so that, if only for a time, she was a personality in Ravangrad.

During the first days after the mobilisation and declaration of war on Serbia Granny Matza kept in her little church. She vanished from the town as if she was afraid of something, nor did anybody make any attempt to attract her there. A crazy wave of childlike rage went through Hungary. Every man, woman or child who in any way suspected the Hapsburgs rushed to market place or street, singing, yelling, bellowing, waving arms, threatening; but the Serbian population, man, woman and child, withdrew into the seclusion of their homes.

They suffered in two ways. Even those who believed in the Dual Monarchy just as you might believe in the solar system, and had been used to set their very thoughts and daily tasks by it, locked themselves away in the circle of their worried families, and saw none but their closest friends. They did not venture to go out and mingle with the crowds, because, perhaps for the first time in their lives, they found themselves doubting in their ability to show enthusiasm, or (more dangerous still) they doubted whether the enflamed rabble would believe them. Crowds of soldiers and uniformed students and maddened men and women pressed through the Serbian quarter, yelling their hatred of Serbia and the Serbians. The windows of Serbian houses were broken, and droppings and other filth spattered the curtains and walls within like spits the face of a martyr; and Serbian families, crouching away in some inside room, all felt equally keenly, all shared the pains of humiliation and insult, so that those who had gone farthest from Serbian sentiment suddenly found themselves in communion with the common mass of insulted tyrannised Serbdom. This common suffering hovering over a people was a force that drove them together, made solid rock of them; and that was a matter in which nobody wanted the old woman's help.

But even those dark days passed. When the first news of the bloody struggle for Belgrade and Shabatz came, the town suddenly sobered down. Wounds, frequent deaths and blood—then hospitals, and a complete new life centred on them. But even then nobody called in Granny Matza. It was only when the first Serbian wounded arrived in bullet-ridden honourable Kumanovo uniforms stiff with blood, and these began to succumb to wounds, that Granny Matza appeared—probably on the suggestion of some dame or other of the Relief Union.

For at the very beginning of it all Serbian womenfolk had hurried to offer their services in the Serbian ward of the monastery hospital. That in itself was a suspicious act, and made husbands and fathers put their foot down. But nobody stood in the way of old Granny Matza. She had free access to every bed. She had no need even to enquire or to spy out, by Serbian cap or khaki—she knew the Serbian wounded by their eyes. Even when those eyes were closed. Our poor fellows, too, immediately recognized her, and she very soon got their complete sympathy, and became *mother* to them all. The name came by itself, and they all called her mother.

From that time on she never went home to the hamlet. She was constantly occupied, so much so that she could not manage all her work herself, but had to go round and enrol other old women. She knew every one of the Serbian wounded, their names and their family history, how they stood and whatever they needed. Every Serbian house too in Ravangrad was now open to her, and expected her every day to report on the wounded, and tell them the newest arrivals' fantastic stories—*don't you fear—that sort of thing—our men are gathering on this that or the other mountain, and they'll make a stand there and whack 'em!*

They were ready, too, for Granny Matza's orders—three shirts must be ready by to-morrow, or a hundred crowns, or a dish of paprikash, or some sweet cakes, because it's Stanoyé from Pozharevatz's saint, or the doctor must write a line for Micky from Dobritch to his wife Milia. Then she, Granny Matza, will run straight round with the card to the magistrate to be censored. That was a semi-renegade she had nosed out and roped into her service. She knew how to spy out and link up all manner of secret ways and means of getting things done.

She lived for nought else now but the Serbian wounded. She never had time now for any other Serbian patients. Civilians had to groan and die and be buried too without her. And all this time the whole Serbian population of the town, still scared to death, shut away in their courtyards, tortured by doubts as to the way it all would end, submitted to her orders and looked to her for solace and for faith.

Whenever any of her *sons* succumbed to wounds or illness she would not let the Hungarian sanitary service *interfere*. She herself washed the bodies and dressed them, and made them quite ready—after she had first assessed the civilians and collected the necessary money and linen.

This sort of thing happened time and again—the dull beat of muffled drum, the plain coffin on an army waggon, a wreath on it with the Serbian tricolour swathed in black crape, and behind the waggon, beside the priest, as first mourner, alone, huddled up, this little old thing stumbling along. A pace behind her would go a unit of Serbian prisoners of war, and then a detachment of Austrian troops. Serbian civilians they passed would halt and take off their hats and cross themselves, and eventually whole families would stand at the windows of Serbian houses, piously and thankfully following Granny Matza with their eyes.

She would follow the coffin, murmuring prayers all the way to the graveyard gate, but as soon as she passed the gate she would begin to chant. She would chant in verse, using the form of the old laments, and keep it up all the way to the graveside; and in the lament she would make some reference to every member of the dead man's family, those he would never see again. She would bring them all in by name, with all those details she had learned of his life and his village, his cattle and his plum orchard, and then at the graveside she would throw in the first handful of soil on to the fresh white wood and end with this

Yaoy, Yaoy, my brave laddie
must you then here make your last bed
in this cold far foreign graveyard
far away from Serbian soil
from our Serbian mother land?
Shall you never go back thither
never more see those two black eyes
those two black eyes of our ruler
of our ruler Good King Peter?
What shall I who wail here tell them
tell your mother when she comes here
as a pilgrim to your cold grave
or what shall I tell our ruler
when he rides up on his white horse
resurrecting what has fallen
so that voiceless voices whisper
to inform him who has fallen?
Though your lips will lie there silent
nor acclaim our conquering ruler
my brave son, my wound bleeding! . . .

While she lamented you could see the prisoners standing sad, rapt in her words, and the Austrian detachment with its officer at its head pathetically waiting for the end, and townsfolk one by one would join the mourning group by the grave and exchange furtive glances, gulping, with eyes swimming, and burning cheeks. Then at the end there would be some come up to her, thank her with their eyes, thrust something into her hand, or a child perhaps would bend down to kiss her hand.

After a year of the war the townsfolk grew bolder, and more and more of them turned out to join in these funerals. Everything at this time was suppressed, everything prohibited; newspapers, books and meetings in Serbian all prohibited. These military funerals were the only occasions on which they could meet and hear Serbian sentiments that they did not even dare give vent to between the four walls of their own homes. All the authorities did for a time was frown, but after the burial of Major Stankovitch they prohibited the civil population from taking any more part in the burial of Serbian soldiers. Yet they did not interfere with old Granny Matza. Who then did they take her for? Part of the Serbian military burial service, no doubt.

At the funeral of Major Stankovitch the townsfolk filled the cemetery; and when Granny Matza began her lament a general sobbing suddenly took possession of the whole crowd. The Austrian officers stood stiff and pale. They did not know what to do. As for the Serbian officers present, all comrades in captivity of the dead man, they drew themselves up stiffly too, but their cheeks were flaming red. But at the end when flowers from the women's bosoms fluttered together with handfuls of soil into the grave, and a Serbian prisoner captain a little more hot-blooded than the rest called out *Thank you, brothers and sisters!*, the Austrian officer in charge rapped out an order to disperse the crowd, and all the Serbian prisoners were punished with C.B.

Yet that evening every Serbian house felt warmer, and Granny Matza's collection for her children yielded a record total.

That evening, as if by plan, heavy artillery began to thunder on Dobro Polié, and the next day the whole Voivodina shivered, as if with the echo of that rumbling cannonade. The most confirmed doubters began to raise their heads and show their noses in public, the freer to discuss the news that was leaking through, or to call the time of day to one another across the public street,

and accompany the greeting with a wink. Windows opened and lit up, prohibited songs floated out of courtyards, and hints even in public became more and more open. Finally a period of feverish anticipation set in. The old edifice was beginning to totter; and nobody could stick solemnly to his daily task. The one great question was *when*—when will *our folk* get here?

But Granny Matza did not stop work. She kept her mind on the same job and the same thoughts. There were still Serbians from Serbia to be cared for, and death had no regard for the change in the situation. Death still carried off its scandalous toll. Granny Matza had no time to be idle.

She went on with her visits and her tax-collecting. But now the Serbian civilians of Ravangrad were so full of enthusiasm that they did not receive her with quite the same almost religious fervour as before. They were in a state of great tension. It was difficult for them not to explode from their pure delight, and they found Granny Matza disturbing to that state of blissful hope. She brought a touch of black into the rosy colour of their new mood. Oh, they gave something, of course, but now only to get rid of the tiresome old thing, no longer from that loyal sense of duty with which she had hitherto inspired them. Nobody sought her out any more, and nobody plied her with questions—because the very air was gravid with answers. She too, of course, knew what was coming, and an expectant joy, like that of a mother as her child takes an examination it is going to triumph in, quivered in her too—but there was so much to do, and, moreover, *they* were coming, she had no doubt about it. It was not for her to hasten their coming; that was not her duty. Her duty was simply to care for those boys and hand them over safe and sound.

Then, when all the fuss about the National Committee in Ravangrad was made, Granny Matza was neither to be seen nor heard. Ravangrad knew that the Serbian forces had crossed the Danube. A prisoner of war had just come back from Novi Sad with the news that they were on the way. The authorities no longer knew to whom they were responsible. The Austrian troops were gone, the police were powerless and scared, the scum had begun to get the upper hand, and there were dirty things done at night anywhere off the main thoroughfares. The town was entirely pre-occupied with excitement and drink. At last they really were coming! The whole town was afoot, on parade, replete with

offerings: linen, and drink, and food, and money; the whole town went down to the station.

They sang and danced for hours on end till at last the train with the locomotive decked with the Serbian tricolour puffed into the station. There was an unearthly din. The crowd rushed the train without regard for whom they seized; each one was out to get hold of a Serbian soldier and pin a wedding towel or flowers on him, and fill his pockets, and feel him all over, embrace him, kiss him, drag him home, sit him at the head of the table, and goggle speechless at him. But while they were making that confusion, struggling and kissing and forcing themselves on those tired men with love and brotherhood and all kinds of gifts, it never occurred to anybody to notice that Granny Matza was not there.

Prisoner of war Miloyé, tubercular, Miloyé from Tchatchak, had been taken so bad that Granny Matza did not dare leave him. He might die, and who would light a candle for him if she was not there? And so she stayed by him and wiped the sweat from his forehead. His breathing grew faster, his chest played like the wings of a butterfly weary of struggling to get out of a spider's web. Granny Matza did her best to bring a little delight at the end. She lifted his head.

'Sonny, sonny,' she said, 'your folk have come, here in the town, they'll soon be along to see you; get it up, sonny, get it up, your old mammy'll help you'

And she thrust her fingers between his dry, emaciated lips into his hot mouth to wrench from his throat that gob he could not find the strength to spit up. But though Miloyé coughed and rent himself and writhed, he could not bring anything up. The dry, yellow, wooden cough seemed it would bring out his very heart, which must be just as dry, like a tatter of rag long squeezed out. He coughed away, and neither heard nor guessed at what Granny Matza had to say.

After that bout he closed his eyes and grew quiet, as if he had fallen asleep. His chest still rose and fell, though more and more weakly. The old thing moved forward, wiped his forehead dry, and took his hand. And then she felt how cold and wet it was, and saw it growing more yellow, and the nails blue, she took the candle she had ready under the bed, lit it and thrust it into his hands.

The last sigh fluttered lightly and easily from his lips and the old woman crossed herself and kissed his forehead, and crossed his hands and put a coin on each closed eye. Then she got up quietly to bring water and lay him out, and tell the priest too, and have a look at those other two in the next room. When she got out into the courtyard the sound of song and shouting by the hospital struck her ears. She smiled and nodded her head as she tipped water out of the wekk bucket.

But the excited crowd had already broken into the hospital, and a number of soldiers with their rifles and a host of flower-bedecked blowsy women, powerless to check their own noisy voices, came rushing down the corridor. Granny Matza did not turn a hair, but merely put the bucket down and stood in their road.

‘Stop that shouting, she cried, there are ill men here, and my Miloyé had just passed away. Come, come, my lad, help me.’

The particular soldier she spoke to gave his rifle to another and took the bucket and followed her. The others stayed outside. When they got inside, the soldier took off his cap and crossed himself and kissed the dead man. Then he glanced a second more closely at him, and turned sharply round.

‘Where from?’

‘Tchatchak. And you?’

‘Rudnik.’

Tchatchak Miloyé had a marvellous funeral. His coffin was hidden under its flowers. As mourners he had a whole corps of officers, the local branch of the National Committee, and a whole corps of fine ladies. There was such a crush that you could not see Granny Matza there.

Two men spoke at the graveside. There was a gentleman representing the National Committee and an officer. There was no place in the ceremony for Granny Matza’s chant. She herself, anyway, had seen that there was no more call for it.

She did not even finish nursing those other two cases. Some fine ladies, she was not quite clear who, took her place. A month later she was no longer even in the town. She had gone back to her hamlet. When the Crown Prince, in the summer of nineteen hundred and nineteen, came to Ravangrad, she very nearly got

run over by some folk driving posthaste down to swell the crowd. And when, the very same autumn, a peasant drove her down to the Lower Cemetery in a plain little coffin resting on some straw in his springless waggon, nobody in the town knew that that child's coffin contained the last remains of Granny Matza.

It was only during the burial service, beside the grave, a little later, that some soldiers hurried up and joined the priest and the peasant (who was the verger of the little Chapel of Saint John) and piously stood round the grave, and kissed the white-wood box farewell. Heaven alone knows who had told them that she it was who had died, one time Granny Matza, whom they or their comrades had once called *mother*.

WHY THE FIN DE SIÈCLE WAS NOT DECADENT

By R. L. Mégroz

IN taking a bird's-eye view of the long and splendid course of English poetry and distinguishing phases and periods by more or less definite characteristics, we pay special attention to all the most important work. The result is that in such historical surveys the chief poets' names become important landmarks. There is of course always an element of make-believe about such generalisations based on 'periods,' the pretence being either chronological or psychological. Thus we tend to shorten the period of the "Romantic Revival," treating a movement which was evident enough when Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* appeared in 1765, as belonging to the early nineteenth century. Not only did the Romantic Revival flourish in the eighteenth century, but it continued to bear fruit, through the early Tennyson, and then through the Rossettis, Swinburne and Morris, until at least the end of the 1870's. There is no need to condemn the chronological elasticity that enables us to generalise usefully about important phases of poetry. It is obvious that the characteristics which we agree predominate in nineteenth century poetry belong to the bulk of the best work. A much more glaring fallacy is the popular one which attributes a special character of decadence to the 'Nineties. The legend was widely disseminated before the war by Holbrook Jackson's vivacious record, *The Eighteen Nineties*, a book which brought into its argument poets and work not only varying as widely as possible in character but extending over at least four decades. The theory of a prevailing decadence as the characteristic of nineteenth century poetry was given currency by Max Nordau's wildly ranting book on *Degeneracy*. These two pieces of clever journalism have done much, perhaps more than anything else, to hypnotise critics as well as general readers into a view of "decadence" as a specially marked attribute of nineteenth century literature, at least during the second half of the century, and as reaching a climax in the 'Nineties. The association of the once familiar term "Fin de Siècle" for the decadent mood, with the idea of the 'Nineties as a distinct period is obvious. It involves an extremely false picture of English poetry, not alone in the 'Nineties, but

from any earlier date in the century one choses to begin a survey.

Examination reveals that throughout the whole of European literature since the Greeks those poets who are temperamentally susceptible to the effects of a phase of *ennui* in cultured society reveal their tendency to moral and spiritual disorder in their style and mood of nescience. Enervating external influences exist at all times, though human societies no doubt pass through phases of especial lassitude or staleness of culture. The poets who respond most readily by reason of their innate tendency to spiritual disintegration are the authors of "decadent" poetry. Usually they appear to resort to an eclectic preciousity of language or of subject derived from previous more vital art, or to some revolutionary dislocation of the elements of their artistic medium. Preciosity is the first stage of a process that ends with disintegration of thought associations as well as of style. If a command of style is maintained, decadent poetry may be as fine and as rich in those perceptions which it is the peculiar function of poetry to express as Baudelaire's and much of Swinburne's last century, and much of Gordon Bottomley's and all of T. S. Eliot's in this. A further generalisation about decadent poets which may be ventured upon here is that they are exceptionally self-centred, or introverted as the psychologists say, sometimes to a degree that may be described as morbid and is enervating to the creative faculty. This is true of the great Christian Rossetti and the little Ernest Dowson. In their efforts to escape from a futile silence they are often ready to seize upon rootless novelties of technique, such as Rimbaud's nonsensical colour-scheme for the vowels, with all the seriousness of priests of a new cult. As the Wilde school did with the movement inspired by Rossetti, and as some youthful and self-conscious admirers of T. S. Eliot are doing today, they often screen an inherent aimlessness with enthusiasm for some kind of first-rate work which provides easy possibilities of eclectic imitation on a lower level of creative energy.

A sign of what happened to the smaller poets temperamentally inclined to share a decadent mood in the so-called 'Nineties is shown by Arthur Symons's statement (made without *arrière pensée*) about Dowson: "I remember his saying to me that his ideal of a line of verse was the line of Poe:

The viol, the violet, and the vine;

and the gracious, not remote or unreal beauty, which clings about such words and images as these, was always to him the true poetical beauty. There never was a poet to whom verse came more naturally, for the song's sake ; his theories were all aesthetic, almost technical ones, such as the theory, indicated by his preference for the line of Poe, that the letter ' v ' was the most beautiful of the letters, and could never be brought into verse too often."

Note, by the by, the typical whittling down of " aesthetic," which has a so much wider and deeper application in the Greek sense of the art of perception through sensory impressions. The reduction of aesthetic theory to a toying with consonants and vowels (the patterning of which is but one of the rudiments of style) is comparable with the tendency of minor poets to speak of or speak to a sort of Pre-Raphaelite damsel whom they call " Beauty." They might have learned better from Rossetti, who did at least know the personification as " Sibylla Palmifera," whose shrine was under the arch of Life, guarded by love and death, terror and mystery.

To dispose of the 'Nineties fallacy first, we may note that half of the men associated with it belong rather to the previous two or three decades. These include Walter Pater, practically all of whose important work was published by 1889, and John Addington Symonds. Oscar Wilde's *Poems* were published in 1881, and he was then already busy misinterpreting Pre-Raphaelitism, turning it into a sort of decorated depravity of true art. Swinburne's definitely decadent poetry, in the first *Poems and Ballads* was published in 1866. The decadent poets who can be justifiably ascribed to the 'Nineties are Lionel Johnson, Dowson, Richard Middleton, Lord Alfred Douglas, Stephen Phillips, and Arthur Symonds. If these were the chief poets of their time we could grant the historians a little chronological license in speaking of the period as the decadent 'Nineties. But whether the period is confined to a decade and a half or admitted to stretch from 1870 to 1910, a brief examination will prove that if we are to judge it by the most important poetry that was written there is no justification for describing it as decadent. There is less justification than for the application of the label to several earlier periods, especially the one which culminated with Byron and Chateaubriand.

Apart from the demonstrable fact that the best of Swin-

burne's work (in *Songs before Sunrise*, *Atlanta in Calydon*, and *Erechtheus*, with a few other poems) is not decadent in style or mood, and leaving the still underrated Rossetti out of account, since he died in 1882, it may be said that all the most important poets excepting Christina Rossetti in certain aspects, were anything but decadent, while several of them were positively anti-decadent.

Among the original poets of the period is one who remained absolutely unknown until 1918, when his friend Robert Bridges edited the Poems of the Jesuit Priest Gerard Manley Hopkins, Hopkins died in 1889. Except for some uncharacteristic work of his early derivative phase which appeared in anthologies, the queer and exciting quality of Hopkins' poetry could not be included in estimates of the "Fin de Siècle" period, but judging by the attitude of conventional criticism (to some extent even of Bridges in his editorial notes) Hopkins would have been brushed aside by the theorists anyhow as nothing more than a freak. There was also Charles Doughty, who followed up his prose masterpiece *Arabia Deserta* with astonishing epics early in the century. Doughty's peculiarities of style, especially his fondness for archaisms, which was a distinguishing element in Pre-Raphaelite poetry, have hindered the general appreciation of him as one of the major poets of the period, but it is time that we should realise the visual riches and rhythmical power of his verse and the grandeur of vision it embodies. That it is possible for so many intelligent people to think of English poetry between the Pre-Raphaelites and the European war without first thinking of Hopkins and Doughty, and some other names which we will now consider, is a sufficient proof of the misdirection of our attention during the past quarter of a century.

Where are these other poets? Among the lesser names is that of W. E. Henley. He might perhaps have been a greater poet if his fresh and original work, especially the vivid impressions in *London Voluntaries* (1893) and the earlier suite "In Hospital" had won sooner the public appreciation they deserved. Instead he became a great journalist and Editor, but there is in his verse an original and modern note that has only been fully used since the war in English poetry, a kind of robust liking for commonplace or macabre facts and images and a contempt for merely traditional poetic associations. His experiments in irregular and

unrhymed verse moreover are not negligible in the evolution of later technique. Perhaps the element in his poetry which wears worst is that slightly affected valourousness of tone heard in the anthology piece, "Out of the night that covers me," which he wrote *In memoriam* a friend. Inferior also, possibly because we have lost touch with that mood, seems the verse that shows his fondness for the sword "clanging imperious." This boyish bravado may owe something to reaction against the graceful hopelessness of decadence, but a more personal source of it may be found in his long struggle with poverty and neglect and the lifelong physical invalidism of an extremely forcible personality. So was Swinburne's violently hyper-erotic verse to some extent an ideal compensation for subnormal virility. Nevertheless it can be admitted that Henley's innate fineness gave to his patriotic poetry (e.g. "*Pro Rege Nostro*") a nobility which was exchanged for bouncing vulgarity in later "poetry of empire."

Exceptionally interesting among these lesser poets, because his achievement has been so underrated, is Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1840-1922). Not only was his version of *The Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia* (1903) a superb and rarely-equalled work of translation from Oriental literature (it was based on his wife's literal prose translation), but in style it ranks Blunt as a genuine poet superior to most of his contemporaries. The freshness of diction and imagery is largely due to his clever stylisation and metrical devices to suggest the Arab minstrels' speech and the simple realism of the primitive romance. The thoughtlessly accepted view of Blunt in our text-books is neatly repeated by Earle Welby in his *Popular History of English Poetry*. The historian can be surprisingly polite about poets of the type of Edmund Gosse, but does not hesitate to dismiss Blunt as a man who wrote some very good sonnets, but really used his energies in politics and the breeding of Arab horses. It is true enough that Blunt wrote many good sonnets, exceptionally independent in style, as the reader of *The Love Sonnets of Proteus* (first published in 1880) and some later ones will agree, but it is a fact that Blunt's principal achievement is the making of English poetry out of Arabic, and this is not even mentioned by Welby. *The Love Sonnets of Proteus* as a collection may however be thought a more interesting addition to English poetry than Meredith's *Modern Love*, in which says our surprising Welby, "almost all the finest qualities of Meredith

combine to make a masterpiece." If this were indeed true, Meredith could be dismissed as a cheaper Byron.

Before we come to Meredith and the other major poets not yet taken into our account, there is R. L. Stevenson (1850-1894) at least, who must be noticed. At this time of day it is easy to underrate Stevenson's quality, and to forget how much more original was his style in the 1880's and 1890's than it appears in a retrospect that includes the acres of falsely-simple verse that cropped up in the sunshine of Stevenson's later popularity. He must also be credited with rivalling Christina Rossetti's *Sing-Song* in his *Child's Garden of Verses*, as a writer of childish verse possessing poetic qualities. He was able in his *Underwoods* to use a genuine lyrical gift and to express sincerely many feelings that harmonised with Victorian views of the home and of individual destiny. Stevenson claimed in self-depreciation, only a prose quality in his verse, but that prose quality of definite and economical diction, and an absence of half-said nothings encouraged a quite important reaction against the stylistic vices of the decadence. The contrast between the almost classical serenity and directness of Stevenson and the otiose sweetness of the minor decadents is illustrated by Stevenson's "Bright is the Ring of Words" and Arthur O'Shaughnessy's "We are the music makers" (The very "Ninetyish" O'Shaughnessy died in 1881, and his work was published in the Seventies!)

In what we are for convenience regarding as anti-decadent poetry, in an attempt to correct the overstressing of "decadence," there is frequently an opposition to the Tennysonian tradition, which was then as supreme in popularity with the reading public as Pre-Raphaelitism was in literary circles. All that the public knew about Pre-Raphaelitism was confined to house decoration. The resolute avoidance of the Tennysonian manner is noticeable in George Meredith (1828-1909), an almost great poet. Not much more need be said about *Modern Love*, published in 1862: it was a failure of literary tact at least, and a mistaken application of Browning's idiomatic treatment of more objectively envisaged themes. The virtues of the sequence of sixteen-line sonnet-like stanzas describing a dead passion were novelistic rather than poetic. After reading through them one seems to have read an ironic story of the failure of married love. There are some memorable poignancies, and subtle perceptions, of course, for

the writer was Meredith, but the immediacy of his concern with the characters of the man and women encouraged his prevailing bent for intellectual criticism, and the hint of Byronic cheapness in the display of erotic pain is queerly emphasised by a rather strident cleverness of comment.

Meredith's poetic fame rests more securely upon the poetry that expresses both his loving observation of the countryside and his philosophical interest in "nature's" cyclic life. He could not help resembling Tennyson in his pre-occupations, for he had much in common with that more harmonious if shallower mind. Hence no doubt his limitations of style in verse came to be peculiarities consciously insisted on, to differentiate the verse from that of the poet whose fame and popularity still overshadowed the age. Possessing Tennyson's refinement of intellect and a much wider understanding of human beings, Meredith was hardened into pugnacity by his difficulty in securing a congenial social environment. Much of Meredith's intellectual dandyism is a compensation for external disharmonies, and the incomplete paganism of his philosophy is his chief weapon against the prevailing conventions of Victorian church-goers, University Dons and public-school boys in high offices, that threatened to suffocate him and his like. The excellent volume of his *Selected Poems*, first published in 1897, leaves no doubt in a modern reader's mind of his survival as an important poet, but the inconclusiveness of the individual character revealed, the wavering unity of this poet's whole body of poetry, which might reasonably be attributed to the *Selection*, actually reflects the effect of the original volumes from which the poems and extracts were taken. These were *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth* (1883), *Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life* (1887) and *A Reading of Earth* (1888).

The poet seems to wrench neo-classicism in poetry from the grasp of Tennyson and Swinburne, so that he may apply to it a negation of any accepted faith, in the form of his own "reading of earth." This impression, gained from poems like "Melampus" and "The Day of the Daughter of Hades," has to be modified, for we find that his choice of sources is guided solely by a preference for themes and arguments that contrasted with the tone of most poetry of his time, especially the Tennysonian. Thus he will turn to historical legend for a savage theme like the "Nup-

tials of Attila " as readily as to classical myth for an un-Victorian religion of nature. Unlike the eccentricities of style of Hopkins and Doughty, Meredith's do not as a rule seem sufficiently justified by necessity. His poetic triumphs are not in those pseudo-philosophical pieces crowded with ideas belonging to an argument, where the metre seems to struggle with the sense. In what is for him the comparatively simple motive of " Love in the Valley," and " The Lark Ascending " he attains a rare command of music and colour to express emotion that awakens thought, instead of the troubled thought that stirred his conflicting emotions. We find also that when he expresses more than usually searching intuitions, as in " The Woods of Westernmain " and " The Hymn to Colour," " Earth and Man " and that very moving short poem, " Bellerophon," the individuality of the style is less eccentric.

In Meredith the pessimist was half-hearted and merely reactionary, but in Thomas Hardy there is a consistency of pessimism which comes of wholly poetic thinking. Less disturbed by intellectual sophistication, firm-based on that Mother-Earth which Meredith philosophised about without experiencing the deeper communion of the peasant, Hardy can create his world of beauty out of an implicit and unwavering intellectual attitude towards existence. His often masterly use of common diction and speech rhythms is one with this consistent and profound simplicity found in no other poet of the time except Doughty. Hardy is not generally a spontaneous singer, and most of his so-called lyrics seem to have an architectural pattern, a static construction dominated by a sequence of events that has the effect of narrative. On comparatively rare occasions however the lines of verse built up one upon another will be fused in a circuit of trembling passion of perception, and a perfection of gravely flowing song results. Homely diction is ensplendoured as it has not been since Wordsworth's happiest moments. This great quality of powerful simplicity gives to Hardy a place in his own age which one feels is scarcely made any higher by the ambitious and monumental epic drama of *The Dynasts*. Will we not increasingly, and with justification, select an ode here, a lyric there, from that huge historical novel in verse, content with abbreviations of the linking movements between them? Perhaps we make a sufficient admission of the power of *The Dynasts* if we see how great it would have been as the chief of his prose

novels. But for his unpopularity as a novelist in the Victorian atmosphere, he might well have written his most ambitious work in prose, and had he done so, might it not have rivalled Tolstoi's *War and Peace*? Certainly the poetry in *The Dynasts* is not only intermittent but usually concentrates in distinct pieces. These are essentially the same as the poems in *Wessex Poems* (1898), *Poems of the Past and Present* (1902), *Time's Laughingstocks* (1909) and the later volumes. The fact that Hardy edited *Select Poems of William Barnes* reminds us that his verse usually has local and rustic scenes for raw material not unlike the material of Barnes's dialect poems. William Barnes (1801-1886) had far less to express than Hardy and his aim was scholarly, but his resources of style are adequate to their purpose. That Hardy is not a quite isolated figure however may be seen by comparing him with another poet of local dialect and simple characters. T. E. Brown (1830-1897) is with his Manx narratives, especially the still vital *Fo'c's'le Yarns* (1881), and a few of his stongly individual lyrics with a gnomic content, somewhere between Barnes and Hardy in the poetic scale. His assertive Christian optimism contrasts with Hardy's Pagan pessimism, but it is not that of a superficial mind, and his enduring artistic virtues owed not a little to his feeling for the classics. Perhaps he could not, like Hardy, have dispensed with such positive influences. We feel that Hardy's stature is due to a spiritual urgency moving that grand imagination, making it impossible for him to confine his art to description or sympathetic recording of actual life. Everything he perceived was steeped in that ideal vision proclaimed by Wordsworth and applied also by the Pre-Raphaelites. Closer scrutiny than this of Hardy's work will but confirm the view of him as a doubly significant figure, an original poet and one whose importance together with those already mentioned greatly outweighs all the decadents.

To give anything like a complete tale of the period under review we have at least to mention yet the later Coventry Patmore and Francis Thompson. The Patmore of *The Unknown Eros* (1877) odes opened new vistas of vision to love-poetry which in Rossetti's magnificent *House of Life* had come to the end of a blind alley of thought and passion. The masterly use of religious symbolism for poetry became not the least of the achievements of the later nineteenth century which provide reason for re-

garding it as a period of renaissance. Not only was Patmore succeeded by Francis Thompson, but some contemporary poetry, including Alan Porter's, is the better for Patmore, and few prophecies about the immediate future would be less risky than another harvest of poetry rich in religious symbolism, perhaps allied with the inexhausted riches of magical and occult lore that has inspired W. B. Yeats and A.E. In A.E. the combination of magic and religious mysticism suggests immense possibilities. Only the verbal mastery of Yeats, nourished also by Irish myth and legend, could have made him what he is, our greatest living poet, for he is almost entirely lacking in the true mystical wisdom of A.E. Let us not forget that these poets were writing some of their finest poems at the time that Francis Thompson erupted like a volcano of splendid poetry, and that time was the 'Nineties.

Two considerable poets so far omitted from this survey are A. E. Housman and John Davidson (1857-1909). They have been left out for fear of involving the argument with inessential distinctions; reasons can be advanced for classifying them with either the decadents or the non-decadents. The same I think applies to Alice Meynell. The refinement of their diction and a marked tendency to preciousness provide the grounds for describing Housman and Alice Meynell as decadents. The language in their hands does seem to be on the verge of etiolation and their eclecticism is reflected in an effect of narrowness which is rather difficult to locate. Their classification is at least doubtful but the present argument can afford to abandon them to the decadents. Davidson, who much more commonly is regarded as a decadent, ought not to be so classified in spite of some plain effects of decadence. The remarkable work in his *Fleet Street Eclogues* and *Ballads and Songs* comes from an energetic spirit in revolt against all the dishonesties of his time, and his fiery emotion preserves a vitality in even those extraordinarily Shakespearian dramas of his with their satirical sidelight upon the contemporary age. As an intellectual fighter and propagandist he is inferior to Meredith in poetry, but sometimes we seem to recognise his kinship with the greater writer. Where he is propagandist, and tries to speak for the age, he often fails in poetry. In his failures are grounds for a surmise that Davidson had it in him to be a poet of decadence, but the urgency of his emotion and a humanitarian indignation drive him continually beyond himself. David-

son is exceptionally interesting to study because of this balancing on the indeterminate fence that separates decadent from non-decadent literature. In the curious "Ballad in Blank Verse of the Making of a Poet," the sonorous eloquence of his dramas is heard :

He saw Apollo on the Dardan beach :
The waves lay still ; the winds hung motionless
And held their breath to hear the rebel god,
Conquered and doomed, with stormy sobbing song,
And crashing discords of his golden lyre,
Reluctantly compel the walls of Troy
Unquarried and unhewn in supple lines
And massive strength to rise about the town.

Who could guess that this is in a vivid ballad of modern life? A hollow ringing is heard in the resounding eloquence as it goes on, reminding us that the Tennysonian era was just ending, but the poet himself is well aware of this emotionally, although his style is slow to march level with the feeling in the poem. The theme is the conflict between the youth, alight with bright pagan dreams of beauty and desire, and his parents' Calvinistic Christianity. Tragically pursuing his dream in the modern world,

rushing from the house
 He sought the outcast Aphrodite, dull,
 Tawdry, unbeautiful, but still divine
 Even in the dark streets of a noisome port.

There is a passionate rhythmical progress in the story that belongs less to a ballad than to a notable narrative poem. This it is still, even to-day, when we are far indeed from Tennysonian language, and those struggles between a narrow religious orthodoxy and the intuitive egoism of youth seem like battles long ago. The passion and pity of it live in Davidson's nervous narrative, triumphing over, even ultimately using a poetic style that was already a little effete. The verdict passed here on the "Ballad in Blank Verse" is deserved by a considerable proportion of Davidson's lyrical work. If after reading his lyric of the factory workers half-holiday, "Piper, Piper," we read Gordon Bottomley's early poem "To the Iron-Founders" there can be no doubt that he passed on a torch which the poets have not dropped since Blake lit it with his thunderous hymn for the New Jerusalem.

Considering that all these poets usually associated with the *Fin de Siècle* have been merely mentioned, this account of English poetry is a long one, but even the weary reader could not say that its length is excessive for the astonishing range and value of the work included in it. And that the subject is not really exhausted one other name will suffice to prove. The late Sir Ronald Ross began writing poetry in the 1870's. While Stephen Phillips' poetically worthless dramas were being acclaimed, Ross had to have his privately printed. There were only two full-length dramas, *Edgar, or the New Pygmalion* (1883) and *The Deformed Transformed* (1892). They at least did indicate a true poet. Some of the dramatic poems in single scenes, which he called Dramettas, were written in the 'Nineties, and were first published in *Psychologies* (1919). As poetry they are excelled by the work of few contemporaries in that vein. In 1906 appeared "In Exile," which is like nothing else in English poetry in *genre*, for it is the inspired journal of a scientist who found relief from his stressful researches on the malaria-mosquito theory in an uncongenial physical and mental environment. Much more of his poetry gained belated publication after his scientific fame was established, concluding with the extraordinary collection of *Poems* written between 1878-1928, a collection which shows some surprising sidelights upon the so-called "Fin de Siècle" as does the collection of Ross's *Fables and Satires* published in 1928. Only one poem by itself perhaps, "Alastor," could give an adequate idea of Ross's quality as a poet to the many people who still are unaware of it, but it is too long to quote.

The generalising theorists have excuses for overlooking poets like Hopkins, Doughty and Ross, but there is no critical excuse for the perspective which has thrust Patmore and Thompson, Meredith and Hardy, to say nothing of the important lesser poets who have been described, into the background of a picture which they ought to dominate. And if the survey included fiction as well as poetry the relative importance of the "decadence" would sink still further into insignificance.

LADY GREGORY: 1852-1932

By Andrew E. Malone

WHEN Lady Gregory died there were people who said, in the conventional phrase, that her loss was irreparable.

But her loss was no more irreparable than was the loss of such great figures of the theatre as Euripides, Shakespeare, Molière, or Ibsen. Like these she had done her splendid work for the theatre and the drama; and like them her life had marked a turning point in theatrical history. She had founded a new national theatre, and created a new kind of drama. It was she who gave to the aspirations and ideals of Yeats and Martyn practical shape, as it was she who is generally believed to have suggested that the location of the proposed Irish Literary Theatre should be Dublin rather than London and it was to her influential support that the project materialised. Her house in London was the meeting-place of artists and wealthy patrons of the arts in her day, and it was to her that W. B. Yeats confided his ardent desire to have "a little theatre somewhere in the suburbs" where his own, and other, verse plays might be staged. In later life she confessed "The plays that I have cared for most all through, and for love of which I took up this work, are those verse ones of Mr. Yeats." Had Lady Gregory not become interested in the production of the plays of Mr. Yeats at a critical moment in Irish history, it is not improbable that Ireland would still be without its national theatre and the distinctive drama that it has given to the world during the past thirty years.

From her earliest childhood she had been devoted to the peasantry of her native Galway, and throughout her life she loved them with passionate intensity. If she did not quite succeed in shedding her "ascendancy" and "landlord" traditions completely, she certainly did succeed in viewing her neighbours with sympathy and understanding. In her childhood days she had seen her home attacked by the Whiteboys, and the attack driven off with the gunfire of her father and his friends, and she had been reared under the imagined shadow of:

"An army of Papists grim
With the green flag o'er them.
Red coats and black police
Flying before them.

In later years she was to become the friend of revolutionaries, and she found their company interesting and profitable. The folklore of her native county fascinated her, and she learned the Irish language the more readily to assimilate it. So she went among her poorer neighbours with that famous note-book which became at the same time the cause of suspicion and the basis of her fame. It was her interest in folklore that in time brought her into the theatre, and it is now quite certain that the theatre she visualised at the London interview with Mr. Yeats, where it was first discussed, would be a folk theatre in every sense of the word. It would be a theatre in which plays of Irish life and character would be staged, and which would be a folk theatre because Ireland is in the main a nation of peasants. London could never have been a satisfactory home for such a theatre: in Ireland it would have a solid rooting in the national life, and there it would in time stimulate the growth of a native drama.

Lady Gregory lived to be the most popular playwright of the Irish theatre, and to be regarded by critics in other lands as one of the leading playwrights of her time. Prophets are not generally regarded highly in their own countries, and artists rarely fare better than prophets. Holding a mirror up to nature, or nature up to a mirror, is an occupation not calculated to secure the enduring affection of compatriots or neighbours, even if it does occasionally earn the applause of foreigners, and it may be all the more detested because of that applause. Ibsen was not at first regarded lovingly by his Norwegian fellow-countrymen; and Synge and O'Casey had their plays howled down by Irish audiences. In time, however, compatriots come to forgive, even if they fail to understand. It is a great mistake to think that preaching to the converted is a waste of energy; it is preaching to the unconverted that is often the real waste. Everyone who has experience of addressing large popular audiences knows that they must be told just those things that they already know very well if their attention is to be held: familiarity breeds not contempt but attention. When audiences are sure that the theme is familiar they are willing to appreciate the virtuosity of the performer; otherwise there is the danger of that howling-down process which reformers and critics know so well. Bernard Shaw understood his audiences, he had been a popular orator before he entered upon his career as a dramatist, so he

concealed his sincerity by the cap and bells of Jester to Demos. His audience might not have laughed with him, so he persuaded it to laugh at him. Comedy is the direct road to popularity, as it may also be the road to greatest drama. Audiences want to laugh; theatres are filled mainly by adventurers in search of laughter. The greatest laugh of the greatest number is the measure of success in the contemporary theatre.

Lady Gregory secured the greatest laugh of the greatest number in the Irish Theatre. Her plays were performed more frequently than those of any other playwright of the Irish theatre, and *Spreading the News* or *Hyacinth Halvey* evoke the same hearty spontaneous laughter to-day that they did 20 years ago. She has been flattered by the imitation of many who accepted her buffoonery without any thought for her satire, or without her ability to write sparkling dialogue or her technical dexterity. The theatrical conception of the Irishman is still largely composed of a blend of Lever, Lover and Boucicault, and neither Larry Doyle nor Broadbent can alter that conception by the simple expedient of reversing characteristics hallowed by tradition. The stage Irishman is believed to have been driven from the stage by the righteous anger of Irish audiences; but only the staginess has gone, the clowning remains to delight audiences and enrich directors. *The Colleen Bawn* is still popular enough, and *The Lily of Killarney* is made to pay for the production of grand opera by touring opera companies. Bernard Shaw is no more loved in Ireland than is Synge or O'Casey because their Halls of Mirrors are said to contain only distorting mirrors such as were once the attractions in cheap fairs. Christy Mahon and Larry Doyle, "Joxer" Daly and "the Paycock" Boyle could not be true to Irish nature when there were such attractive creatures as Myles na Coppaleen, Danny Mann and *Paddy the Next Best Thing* to testify to the contrary. Irish heads are not so hard as Shaw suggested; and the happy-go-lucky rolling stone, with a laugh for life's little ironies and a tear for life's little joys, is still the Irishman beloved of audiences. If he uses a little more bad language in this twentieth century, as he hitches his trousers, it merely means that manners change and human nature remains. The spirit of Lady Gregory's plays is that of Lever and Lover rather than that of Shaw or Synge.

"Comedy is drama that studies universal interests and

depicts their meaning or influence, quite as certainly as does the tragic method, but it enlightens us through our sense of laughter," says Gilbert Norwood, "not of tears or horror. Its superficial counterpart is farce—the employment of the ludicrous to engage our attention in what does not touch our own heart or interests." Comedy is the humour of character: farce is the humour of situation. *John Bull's Other Island* is comedy because its humour springs directly from the impact of the personalities of Doyle and Broadbent in contact with Ireland. *Spreading the News* is farce because its entire structure depends upon the deafness of Mrs. Tarpey. If Mrs. Tarpey has been able to hear correctly the whole series of ludicrous incidents would have been obviated, and Bartley Fallon would never have been known as the typical Irishman upon whom all the troubles of the world "are sure to fall." Fallon and Haffigan are brothers in affliction from the lips out; both are representative of the whining type of Irishman which is more common than national dignity can afford to tolerate. Both are comic characters; but the laugh is at Haffigan's shrewdness and at Fallon's cringing imbecility. Fallon simply must be laughed at; he is the typical figure of farce not of comedy. Lady Gregory's humour in her early plays was the humour of situation, of farce, not that of character and comedy. Her comic figures are 'characters' not characters; they have mouths but it is impossible to believe that they also have brains.

"Comedy and not tragedy was wanted at our Theatre," Lady Gregory said, "and I let laughter have its way." It is easier to laugh at a fool than to laugh with the wise, and Lady Gregory in her beginning chose the easier way. Bartley Fallon, Hyacinth Halvey, Davideen, Cracked Mary, and the other eccentric inhabitants of Cloon, are direct descendants of Handy Andy, born about the same time as Shaw's Larry Doyle, Synge's Christy Mahon, and Meredith's O'Donnell. At a moment when pure comedy was being written about, and even by, Irishmen, Lady Gregory wrote her first little farces, and played down to the low conception that Irish people had of themselves. Compared with Fallon and Hyacinth Halvey Christy Mahon is indeed a hero; but Fallon and Halvey evoked hearty laughter and Mahon only a lusty riot.

Lady Gregory was born in 1852, a member of the prominent family of Persse, at Roxburgh in County Galway. The family

was of English extraction and its outlook and sympathies were as British as its political view was Unionist. But in Galway the past still is alive, is still vivid in speech, in stone, and in human misery. Young and eager in intellect as it is bright of speech, with a grave sonority that national education and cheap newspapers have combined to take from the English speech of other places. In early life she was attracted by the folk songs and tales of her neighbours and she commenced that systematic collection which has since been given to the world in a series of justly-famed volumes. This folk-lore was the devouring passion of her early life, compelling her to learn Irish so that she could converse with the peasantry. When she married, in 1882, Sir Robert Gregory, who had been a Colonial Governor and was a Director of the British National Gallery, she lived much in London; and there she met, as one of her husband's close friends Sir Frederick Burton, the artist, archeologist and scholar, who had been the friend of Davis and Petrie, had known John Mitchel, and had designed the title-page for *The Spirit of the Nation*. In London, also, she came to know W. B. Yeats, George Moore, and Edward Martyn, all three of whom had affiliations with Connacht, and at least one of whom was a comparatively near neighbour in Galway. Edward Martyn, who lived in the next barony in Galway, brought her into close contact with Douglas Hyde and the Gaelic League, and so completed the chain of circumstances which led to the foundation of the Irish Theatre, the rise of the Irish drama, and the use of Kiltartan dialect on the stage.

In 1898 Lady Gregory had a conversation with W. B. Yeats in which he expressed the desire to have "a little theatre somewhere in the suburbs," presumably of London, in which poetic drama could be staged. Lady Gregory fixed that ambition upon Dublin, and it was she who made its realisation possible. The circular letter soliciting support for the Irish Literary Theatre was drafted at her house at Coole, and bears the impress of her personality; and it was largely through her efforts that the Theatre actually came into being a year later. She had developed from the little girl who had been scared by "Fenian atrocities" to friendship with a Fenian leader, support of the Gaelic League, translation and publication of Irish folklore, to the foundation of a theatre and a drama for Ireland. Her great phase began when she undertook the organisation of a theatre for Ireland in

Ireland ; and then she entered upon a career which was destined to make her name known throughout the world, and to give her an honoured place among the playwrights of her time.

Before she began to write plays, or even to take any part in theatrical affairs, Lady Gregory had accumulated a vast and profound knowledge of the thoughts, beliefs and customs of the West of Ireland. Always a welcomed visitor to the cottages of the peasantry she availed of every opportunity to gather sayings and folk-tales, and to study the dialect which she later used so beautifully in her books and plays. It is doubtful, however, if she ever got anything more than the peasant speech ; the mind eluded her. She was of the 'gentry,' the landlord class, and therefore suspect in the troubled times of the 1880's and 1890's ; so she viewed the peasantry from without, from above, and as her outlook was essentially comic she saw them as figures of fun. "There is nothing in literature quite like her bewildered peasantry," a friendly critic has noted with satisfaction, and he might with truth have added that there is nothing like them in life. They are the product of a rich humanity, a highly-developed sense of humour, and an unconscious snobbery, garnished with their native dialect and idiom, and are very enjoyable on the stage. How effective is her use of the Kiltartan dialect may be noted in her translations from Goldoni and Molière, to whose comedies she gave probably their most attractive dress in English. Some kinship with Molière Lady Gregory certainly had, but she brought little of the wide experience and shrewd observation of Molière to her original work. The fine subtlety of Molière will be sought in vain in her plays : she loved a broad situation, with characters sketched in bold lines, each embodying some simple human quality. Her characters are extravagantly simple, there is no guile in them ; they have little of that shrewd cunning which is the mark of the peasant in Ireland as elsewhere.

Lady Gregory's name is associated with more than forty plays ; she had been writing plays for over thirty years, and she was the original patentee of the Abbey Theatre and one of its Directors from its foundation to the time of her death. Her industry and energy were marvellous, resembling the Spanish dramatists the Martinez Sierras in their wide range and comprehensive sweep. All her plays have been published, and all but three have been staged at the Abbey Theatre. Her translations

from Hyde, Goldoni, and Molière have also been staged and published, and only her translation of Sudermann's *Teja* has not been published.

The one-act plays are mainly farces, or farcical comedies, with an under-current of satire, and possibly *The Workhouse Ward* contains a criticism of Irish politics which has escaped notice in the theatre. *The Rising of the Moon* is a delightful comedy of abnormal political conditions : the choice of the police Sergeant when duty and sentiment conflicted was difficult, and the artistry by which Lady Gregory used the Ballad Singer to rouse his latent patriotism is masterly. This and *The Gaol Gate* are Lady Gregory's highest achievements in the one-act form. *The Gaol Gate* has all the tragic intensity of *Riders To The Sea*, and the final *caoin* cannot fail to wring the hearts of any audience. *The Travelling Man* gives a glimpse of the mystical strain in Lady Gregory which never managed to secure adequate expression.

Some of the most interesting, and the most successful, of Lady Gregory's plays are to be found among those collectively entitled *Folk History Plays*. Her preparation for such drama had been long and arduous, resulting in the collection and publication of many volumes of folk lore and mythology. These *Folk History Plays* are attempts to translate the subjects of Irish historical tragedy into terms of folk drama, and in the Kiltartan dialect she found a medium excellently suited to her needs. Three of the plays are called tragedies, and three tragi-comedies ; and five of the total of six have been staged at the Abbey Theatre. " I had from the beginning " she said " a vision of historical plays being sent by us through all the counties of Ireland. For to have a real success and to come into the life of the country, one must touch a real and eternal emotion, and history comes only next to religion in our country." *Kincora* was the first attempt to make that vision a reality ; it had several successors but none of the folk history plays has yet had a chance to intermingle in the life of the country. Only at long intervals are they staged, and the travelling company never came into being. So she is popularly known only as the author of little farces, and this is all the more regrettable because her best comedies are folk history plays, and her best tragedy *Grania* has never been staged in Ireland at all.

Kincora takes an episode in Irish history in which the victor of Clontarf is himself crushed by the treachery of Gormleith.

There are all the essentials of tragedy, but high tragedy is not achieved. *Dervorgilla* is, next to *Grania*, the best of the folk tragedies. Its single act is devoted to "the swift, unflinching, terrible, judgment of the young," showing the gifts of the aged Dervorgilla having her gifts spurned because she had betrayed her country. "Do not be afraid to give back my gifts," she says, "do not separate yourself from your companions for my sake. For there is little of my life but is spent and there has come upon me this day all the pain of the world and its anguish, seeing and knowing that a deed once done has no undoing, and the lasting trouble my unfaithfulness has brought upon you and your children for ever." The same theme is treated by Mr. Yeats in *The Dreaming of the Bones* with great effect. It is *Grania*, however, that is her highest achievement in tragedy; because in its emotional content and poetic fervour it is superior to many historical tragedies that have long enjoyed world fame. Deirdre has had her admirers in plenty, *Grania* but few, and of these Lady Gregory was the most ardent. "I think," she once said, "I turned to *Grania* because so many have written about sad, lovely Deirdre, who when overtaken by sorrow made no good battle to the last. *Grania* had more power of will, and for good or evil twice took the shaping of her life into her own hands." In this three-act tragedy of love and jealousy only three persons are concerned, but in falling under the spell of *Grania* and her story Lady Gregory achieved her masterpiece in tragedy. It is often said that the one-act play was her proper medium, and it is true that she failed more often in long than in short plays, but *Grania* is a crushing refutation of the statement.

The Story Brought by Brigid is based upon a West Irish folk tale in which Saint Brigid is credited with personal attendance at the Crucifixion. On the stage the play was fragmentary, and drastic revision might have done for it what was done for *Kincora*.

In political satire Lady Gregory was strong: her best comedy effects were satirical, as her best comedies are *The Canavans*, *The White Cockade* and *The Image*. *The Canavans* satirises an accommodating coward, and is a good effort at satirising an aspect of Irish character that is too rarely given such merciless treatment. King James of the Running, James II., provides a fitting subject for the satire of *The White Cockade*: to see the cowardly monarch packed into a barrel is worthy of the laughter it secures. In *The*

Image the factions wrangle while the artists die, and the material goods of life are either wasted or stolen. *The Image* is excellent comedy that will bear seeing many times.

The strain of mysticism which first manifested itself in *The Travelling Man* come close to triumph in *The Dragon* and *The Golden Apple*, but perhaps fantasy not mysticism would be a more correct title for them. All the best qualities of Lady Gregory's art are exhibited in *The Golden Apple*; humour, humanity, *naivete*, and a complete faith in the fairy world such as Barrie seems to lack and Maeterlinck possesses. If it was primarily "a play for Kiltartan children" it is also a play which will delight the children of the whole world.

When all her plays have been studied only a few stand out prominently: *The Rising of the Moon*, *The Gaol Gate*, *Grania*, *The Image*, *The White Cockade*, *The Canavans*, *The Dragon*, and *The Golden Apple*. To these must be added her translations from the French and the Italian: Molière's *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, *The Rogueries of Scapin*, *The Miser*, *The Would-be Gentleman*, and Goldoni's *Mirandolina*. Thirteen plays of surpassing merit and interest! No mean contribution to the contemporary drama from a lady whose first play was not written until she had entered middle age. To have a third part of the total output recognisable as excellent is the tribute that Lady Gregory's art demands from the contemporary theatre. The little farces fade quickly from the memory: it has been said that they nearly emptied the Theatre, but that is so far from the fact that exactly the contrary is true. It was these little farces, indeed, which first brought popularity to the Abbey Theatre, and the money they earned enabled other, and possibly, better plays to be staged there.

Lady Gregory's reputation will not rest upon the little farces, which have served their purpose and their time and may be allowed to fade into peaceful oblivion. The most superficial examination of her plays must quickly draw attention to her most obvious limitation as a dramatist, her almost complete lack of imagination. Where she was able to draw from life she was invariably successful, even her fairy and wonder plays were drawn from the life around her, and she was often masterly. If her dialogue has little of the poetry of Synge it has a rhythm of its own that is as pleasing as it is vital and vivid. It has become the

custom in Ireland now to laugh at 'Kiltartanese,' but the laughter has been caused by imitators and not by the originator herself. Her dialogue seemed so easy that it proved a temptation to imitators, and induced many to write plays who had neither art nor artifice. Lady Gregory's dialogue is crisp, idiomatic, rich, real, and pleasant: it keeps close to the peasant speech which she knew all her life and in consequence it has nothing of the poetic quality that marks Synge's more imaginative selectiveness. Dialogue was Lady Gregory's strength, as imagination was her weakness: but talk alone will not make great plays, and the bulk of her work was talk only. She could be as tedious and as dull as the worst in the repertory of the Abbey Theatre, but she also scaled the heights with the best. She had not the qualities which would have kept her for a long time on the heights; her material was too thin for that rarified atmosphere.

An observer, a note-taker among the people, rather than a sharer of their inmost lives, she assumed unconsciously an attitude towards the people that was somewhat snobbish. Neither herself nor the people could forget that she was 'the gentry' and they were 'the people'; and no conscious effort to secure confidential contact can be entirely successful. That is why so much of her dramatic work must be considered as in the Lever tradition. It is a striking tribute to the strength of a few Irish writers of the last century that they succeeded in moulding the popular conception of Irish life and character to their own models. It is the neglected Edgeworth, Carleton, and Le Fanu who might have been the better literary models as they were the better literary artists. Time will, doubtless, produce a new concept of the national life, and when that process is complete Larry Doyle will be recognised as no less Irish than Christy Mahon, while Bartley Fallon, Hyacinth Halvey, Malachi Naughton, Davideen, Cracked Mary, and many another of the same kind will share with Handy Andy the space reserved in a museum of national pathology for variations from the normal. Pathology will keep them safely, and the theatre will know them no more. *Grania*, *The Canavans*, *The Image*, *The White Cockade*, *The Golden Apple*, *The Dragon*, *The Gaol Gate*, *The Rising of the Moon*, and the adaptations from Molière and Goldoni are sure to give Lady Gregory an enduring place amongst the playwrights of her time, and a leading place amongst Irish dramatists of all time.

It is, however, for her great work in founding and guarding the Irish theatre, and so making possible Ireland's great contribution to contemporary drama that the gratitude of Ireland and the world is due to Lady Gregory. She was the Fairy Godmother, as Miss Horniman was the Foster Mother, who made smooth its way and made difficulties seem insignificant. Small in stature, frail of physique she could find the courage to say "No" either to an author or to Dublin Castle as occasion demanded. She did her great work, and while her death left Ireland poorer her life had made Ireland immensely richer in those things that will count more heavily in the scale than many things that are more highly valued to-day.

A PASSION FOR ROMANCE¹

By Vincent O'Sullivan

Here is a title better suited to Mrs. Atherton's reminiscences than the one on the title page. Taken as a whole, her book is an account of the effort of an eager indefatigable woman to live on the romantic side of life. Her books are romances. If Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson are to be called novelists, the term is too narrow to include Mrs. Atherton also. She speaks well of Ouida, renders homage to this great romantic nature so long scoffed at by the superior and condescending. When she explores High Society in England she finds that Ouida has reported faithfully, and she encounters Ouida characters. The reason is, no doubt, that she saw people and things in the same romantic haze as Ouida. She has not Ouida's style, surely one of the best styles of the later nineteenth century, though it is ignored or despised by the makers of anthologies. Charles Whibley said that Mrs. Atherton's style is sloppy, and although the text of the present volume has apparently been revised—the book is dedicated to "My kind and scholarly editor"—it slops over a good deal. She has the *Style coulant* which Baudelaire loathed in George Sand. But, like Sand, she has powers of expression to an unbounded extent, and if sometimes her descriptions fail, it is not because words have failed her. Often, when she has something huge to describe, some catastrophe, she is quite equal to the theme, and even achieves grandeur more than once.

Some other traits Mrs. Atherton has with George Sand. If Chopin and Alfred de Musset and Sandeau and Michael de Bourges, etc. had been in her life as they were in Sand's, she would doubtless have given us novels about them, and perhaps she would not have denied the originals as Sand did. Anyhow, she tells us frankly who were the models for some of her characters, and it appears she told the victims too. Whether she herself is the heroine who plays opposite these heroes she does not say. George Sand was *Indiana*, and *Lucrezia Floriani*, and the artist in *Elle et Lui*. It was so she wanted the world to see her—virtue unrewarded, the patient steadfast woman sacrificed to the whims of the impossible male. The reality of course was quite different; and it is the George Sand as she was in reality, as she shows herself in her letters, that is attractive. In so far, Remy de Gourmont was right when he said that without her lovers George Sand would be of very little interest.

She carried her hypocrisy into her Memoirs (*Histoire de ma Vie*) which is nevertheless a good book, though far from being the best autobiography in existence, as Leslie Stephen decided it to be. Such as it is, Mrs. Atherton's book does not come near it, except here and there in vivacity of presentation.

There are two kinds of autobiographies. There is also a third with which the book-market has been flooded of recent years; and it is a still more worthless production than the "romanced" biography. They are books written by men and women who have little value in themselves, about whose lives, at any rate, nobody wants to hear; but as their lot has thrown them into the company of a number of people celebrated for one thing or another, they arrange with some book-dealer to publish a string of anecdotes, stupid, or outrageous, or defamatory and ill-natured. Most anecdotes are chatter; the only anecdotes worth having

¹ "Adventures of a Novelist," by Gertrude Atherton (London: Jonathan Cape).

are those which are characteristic and reveal a man. Bacon's four or five anecdotes about Queen Elizabeth are as good as they come ; you see by them the woman she was and her way of talking. Again, it is not because people have lived cheek by jowl with the notorious that they are justified in publishing a collection of twaddling anecdotes. They must know how to write, and also to select and present, and how to create an atmosphere. Not many have such gifts.

As for the two admissible kinds of autobiography, they may be called the interior and the exterior. In one there is a revelation in relation to one's self, in the second a revelation in relation to other people. The first is much the rarer, for not many are they who have lived a worldly life and can bear to scrutinize their hearts. Edgar Allan Poe thought that nobody could. The best autobiography of all is perhaps Mme. de Staël's—not the renowned Mme. de Staël of Napoleon's time, but Rose Delaunay, who was a sort of chambermaid-secretary to the Duchess de Maine during the Regency. The poor thing had not much of a life. Brought up in a convent at Rouen by charity, passed from one great lady to another, mixed up in their squabbles, involved in the Spanish plot by her turbulent mistress and put in the Bastille ; and then, after the best of her life was gone, married by her mistress's orders to a captain of the Swiss Guards who was paid to marry her. Such as her life was, there it is set down without remission or shade, nothing concealed, nothing extenuated. Doubtless it is not a frank and entire confession. Even if one set out to write that, the result would never be that, seeing what human nature is. But if there is arrangement of the material with a view to heighten the dramatic effect or to sanctify the writer, it is not perceptible ; nor is it likely. The bright rapid style, lucid as the noonday sun, leaves no corner in shadow. "What book gives more than Mme. de Staël's an inexorable conviction of reality ?" asks Sainte-Beuve. And he adds : "So it is that these memoirs are the contrary of a story which is dreamed, and as with life, as they go on they get sadder."

In the second category are George Sand's memoirs, and also Mrs. Atherton's. Neither gives any real picture of the writer. Mrs. Atherton does not even attempt to do that. George Sand does, but she falsifies the picture, either deliberately, or because she could not help it. George Sand's is a much better book than Mrs. Atherton's, both because she is a better writer (*not* a better novelist), and because the woman shown is more attractive. Sand was magnanimous, large-hearted, she had the sense of suffering humanity, and did really her best to bring consolation and hope to wretches broken on the wheel of life. Mrs. Atherton may be also all that to her friends, but to those who have just her autobiography whereby to estimate her character she seems a woman interested only in herself, in the success of her books, and in her position in "Society." At all the bad jumps there is somebody standing to see her over. "I knew Mr. (or Mrs. or Lady or Lord or Senator or Duchess)—and I went to see him and everything was arranged." That kind of phrase occurs rather often in her memoirs. Sand cared nothing about High Society, and she did not take her books seriously. She turned out her "packet" every day—or rather every night—as regularly as the year came round. Mrs. Atherton is the prophetess. After long periods of sterility the Spirit descends upon her, flings her at a desk, and then comes the outpouring. She even says that during the gestation of one of her books she went through all the symptoms of a woman with child.

One section of Mrs. Atherton's book is as good as anything in George Sand's book. In her search for material to write a life of Alexander Hamilton she was obliged to visit the West Indies. The account of her uncomfortable experiences on two of the small islands is a masterpiece as a study in fever and the grotesque. Her description of her early life in California, childhood and marriage, is also vivid and amusing, and done without any sign of that tenderness with which those in advanced age, when the lights of life are successively failing into darkness, are supposed to turn to the scenes and events of their youth.

But those who sell the book cannot depend for its success on these two sections, but rather on the promises of an index of several pages which bristles with well-known names. Here, says a purchaser glancing over this glossy index, is a woman who has known everybody. Alas, the index is deceptive. You take at hazard the name of Somerset-Maugham, and when you turn to the indicated page you discover that Mrs. Atherton sat next to him at lunch and found him too superior to talk to her. You find that Arnold Bennett and Oscar Wilde she did not know at all: that H. G. Wells she met once at a public dinner: that Meredith she did not know either, but reports some idiotic talk of Whistler about him. Arthur Balfour, Winston Churchill, Aubrey Beardsley, Max Beerbohm, are other names taken from the index at random of men she scarcely knew and has nothing of the least interest to say. Others whom she met casually but had some talk with, such as Hardy and Henry James, she presents more substantially. To James she dedicated one of her books and prints the letter he wrote her on this subject, in which he hoped that his name might contribute to bring her work better fortune than it usually contributed to bring his own work. At this time (1904) according to Mrs. Atherton, a new book by James had no sale. "Fortunately he had a private income," she remarks, and berates her fellow countryfolk for their neglect of this great writer which she ascribes to the middle-class (*middle-class* in the American sense) ideology of the actual reading public. There is something more. There is the notion that James's books are concerned with English aristocratic and fashionable circles, and this, for some reason or other, infuriates the latter-day American, who thinks it implies superiority. Even Julian Hawthorne in his excellent book of memoirs which covers about the same period for England as Mrs. Atherton's reflects this feeling about Henry James. The truth is, of course, that James's later books, which are also his best, "The Ambassadors," "What Maisie Knew," "The Wings of the Dove," and the others, have little more to do with English fashionable life than the books of Walt Whitman or Dreiser, and are placed just where the conditions given can work out best. If that place were Greenland or Mexico James would have placed his story there instead of London or Paris or Rome or New York. He simply chose what he knew best.

Mrs. Atherton did not know James well, and to judge from her book she has known well outside her family only four or five—Ambrose Bierce, Phelan, Californian millionaire and Senator, Hilaire Belloc, the Earl of Durham, whom she knew when he was a student at Munich, Ernest Dowson. Perhaps one might add Whistler. Of all the men named, she gives elaborate portraits which are not hampered by reticence. There is a savage love and ferocious affection in the cruel portrait of Lambton (Lord Durham), by far the best and most felt in the book. It is the continuation of her dissection of him in her novel, "Tower of Ivory," and it is safe to infer that of all the men she has known in her life she has studied him most. It is all of course in abominable taste, being about a living man.

Ernest Dowson is also done with a master hand, though some details are hard to comprehend. She was staying at an hotel in a Breton village, and Mr. Horace Annesley Vachell proposed to introduce Dowson. "It must be years since he has spoken to a decent woman—if he ever knew one!" But Dowson must at least have known the women of his own family, and his family was as good as Mr. Vachell's or Mrs. Atherton's. However it might be with a foreigner like Mrs. Atherton, an Englishman like Mr. Vachell could make out under all Dowson's degradation that he was well-born. There are one or two other odd details, but let them pass. It is a long time since Mrs. Atherton walked with the poet in the Breton lanes.

Except for her own relations, the only women of whom careful portraits are drawn are Lady Colin Campbell, who seems to have had some notoriety in the eighteen-eighties, and Alice Meynell. Mrs. Atherton was certainly not a close friend of Mrs. Meynell, and it is hardly possible that Mrs. Meynell liked her much. Perhaps they saw each other no more than three or four times. This is only a greater tribute to Mrs. Atherton's powers of observation, for the portrait is accurate to the nicest point, as far as it goes. It is wholly exterior, concerned with person and manner, dress and address.

There is yet another woman to whom Mrs. Atherton gives some extended attention. If you turn from the reference in the index to Mrs. Craigie, you find these innocuous lines. "John Oliver Hobbes (Pearl Craigie), a short dark woman who would have been plain but for a pair of remarkably fine eyes." Kindly honeyed words which surprise one who recalls the mauling of Mrs. Craigie in one of Mrs. Atherton's romances—"Ancestors," I think it is. But on p. 380 she returns to Mrs. Craigie, and without naming her, pounds her thus:—

"I made several enemies among the lady-novelists of England. One, whose father had made a fortune in trade, owned a literary weekly in which she took care I should be constantly slammed. She even turned her back on me pointedly one night when she was receiving with the hostess at a literary party, and tried to blackball me at a club. She had been born in the United States, although English by upbringing, and until I appeared had been the only American pebble on the literary beach. She always rises in my memory with eyes like daggers above an elevated pug. It is never wise for an imported American to ape English rudeness. It takes a great lady to know how to be rude and not look like a housemaid in a temper."

Not words serene, nor yet words of contempt, for contempt is expressed otherwise, and best by silence. It must have been a deep wound that Mrs. Craigie gave her to rankle still so venomously after many years. How she must regret that Mrs. Craigie is not here to wince under the calculated outrages of the last lines! One cannot know what passed between the two women, and it is quite plausible that one detested the other, each seeing through to the other's essential weakness. Mrs. Craigie's father it was who owned the *Academy*. It appears from Mrs. Craigie's Life and Letters that she had not much power to have anybody "slammed" or praised in it. The editor was Lewis Hind, and he was perfectly capable of arranging what slams he wanted done himself. Mrs. Craigie had no reason to be jealous of Mrs. Atherton, who at the time she speaks of was generally unknown, whereas Mrs. Craigie was very well known indeed. Neither was Mrs.

Craigie "the only female American pebble on the literary beach" till the arrival of Mrs. Atherton. There were Elizabeth Robins, Anne Douglas Sedgwick, Blanche Willis Howard, Menie Muriel Dowie, one or two others. Perhaps unwittingly Mrs. Atherton offended or otherwise displeased Hind, who had a reputation for vindictiveness and was said to vent his spite by articles in the *Academy* and *Daily Chronicle*. That is more likely than that Mrs. Craigie arranged to have her "slammed." Mrs. Craigie, in fact, does not seem to have given much thought to her, for she is not mentioned in the *Life and Letters*.

Mrs. Atherton is very feminine: it is one of her charms. When John Lane published a little book of hers sometime in the early Nineties, Edmund Gosse praised it, and was very benign when he met her. So Edmund Gosse was the Prince of Critics and the most exalted Man of letters (*sic*) of that time. "His only rival was Andrew Lang of the 'elegant mind' and boorish manners." Andrew Lang evidently did not fall for Mrs. Atherton. Whether or not he had an elegant mind—Mrs. Atherton does not seem to think so, for she puts the phrase between quotation marks by way of declining responsibility for it—Lang had an extraordinary mind, one of the most extraordinary that ever man was dowered with. Gosse, a literary essayist of a kind produced in France by hundreds in every generation; Lang, a master of four or five very difficult subjects and recognized as an authority by experts in each. Gosse is not to be mentioned in the same breath with him. Lang hated intrigue, cared nothing about social backing or the "best houses." I don't believe even a Stuart Duchess could have got an article out of him that he did not want to write. He wrote articles well, but why should he have been writing articles? That was business for people like Gosse. Lang was a waste; his life an intellectual tragedy. He knew too much about too many things. Therefore he wrote too much, and at present his books have fallen out of print. The University of St. Andrews, which reverences his memory, should see to it that a collected edition of all his writings be made.

He had not "boorish manners," and it is amazing how any one can apply such a word to Lang. To Henley, if you like, and to a few others who might be named; but Lang, whatever he did, could not be boorish. There were certain kinds of people whom he morbidly loathed, and his gypsy blood warned him in advance of their approach. He carried into history his repugnances, and visited on Shelley and Leigh Hunt the distaste he would have felt in their company. Many prejudices he had. He feared boredom and consequently was abrupt at times. To the female novelists practising when Mrs. Atherton established herself in London he was not sympathetic, and this led certain of them to say that he was unfair to all women writers. But he liked Jane Austen, he liked Miss Braddon. The "New Woman," so much spoken of at the time, and exemplified in various positions in the works of Sarah Grand, George Egerton, Mrs. Caffin, he did not care for at all. But he did care for Joan of Arc, who was a "New Woman" of her day and hour: his writings on the subject are esteemed by the French specialists. But Joan was impelled by her Heaven-sent voices, and Lang thought the New Woman of the Nineties was impelled by something quite different.

Whether Mrs. Atherton came into personal contact with Lang she does not say, nor yet whether he derided her book. But unless his attention had been particularly directed to the book it would not have come to his ken in the ordi-

nary way. Mrs. Atherton probably exaggerates the effect of her literary *debut* in the London of the Nineties. Her book, published by Lane, may have had a certain success, but it certainly had not the brazen renown of "A Yellow Aster," "The Heavenly Twins," "Keynotes," "The Visits of Elizabeth"—all four by women. Mrs. Atherton's success in London Society, when, as she tells us, she had not a night free for a month ahead, was certainly, much more than it was the triumph of an author, *un succès de jolie femme*. Think you that Robertson Nicoll, the great log-roller, would have organized a "boom" for some plain little drab creature who had managed to publish two not very remarkable or very well written novels, who had no introductions from California millionaires to the English rich and titled—think you that sagacious man Nicoll would have spontaneously presented yon cowed poverty-stricken ugly little woman to a firm of publishers who would press a large cheque into her hand for a book of which not a line was written? If you think so, you know more of the ways of publishers and Robertson Nicolls than I do.¹

Then there was the excellent Walter Besant. One day he sent a line to the young Mrs. Atherton, whom he had never seen, begging her to favour him with a visit. He shewed her the latest number of *The Author*, in which the New York correspondent, "a man named Hapgood," ventured to say that the Americans did not take Mrs. Atherton very seriously. "Pure spite," cried the handsome Mrs. Atherton. "The Americans hate me. They're furious because I'm a great woman in England." "I thought as much" said the obliging Besant. And he "fired" the correspondent.

"The man named Hapgood," may have been Norman Hapgood, magazine editor, diplomat and political counsellor. He must have laughed when he got his discharge from *The Author*. And it is quite likely he was impartial in what he wrote to it. Many years after the event Mrs. Atherton relates, I sent a French magazine in which I had spoken of her to a well-known American critic and asked him what he thought. He replied that he was "innocent of her works." He certainly had no "spite" against her. And by that time (about 1919) Mrs. Atherton had done something more important than when eminent Gosse sprinkled her with rose-water.

But eminent Gosse did sprinkle, did sit next to her at many dinners, did chat, tea-cup in hand, of her genius; therefore hath the Lord exalted him and his name is above all critical names. It is rather strange, by the bye, to see Edmund Gosse called the Most exalted Man of Letters in the English Nineties, when Henley, Saintsbury, Leslie Stephen, Oliver Elton, were at the crest of their achievement, and each in most ways superior to Gosse. Mrs. Atherton does not mention any of these men: they were not to be found in the fashionable houses.

"One night I met at dinner a little, bowed, snuffy, shabby, rather dirty old man, whose name was Theodore Watts-Dunton." Oscar Wilde maintained that only Queen Victoria had managed to harness successfully six adjectives before a substantive. "I had never heard of the man," continues Mrs. Atherton. "He was all a-twitter because he had written a novel of Romany life that had. . . . sold a few copies." But somebody kindly explained:—"He is a conceited ass. And he's been the ruin of Swinburne." And Mrs. Atherton concludes: "One has

¹ "Dr. Nicoll had frequent eulogies in the *British Weekly* and the *Bookman*, and pulled other strings as well, for I was interviewed, paraphrased, and photographed" (p. 287).

only to read the *Life and Letters of Edmund Gosse* to see what he and others thought of Watts-Dunton."

Now, this is insolence, and gratuitous insolence, for she has no personal grievance against Watts as she has against "the man Hapgood," and possibly against Lang. Who cares what Gosse thought of Watts? Watts was a kind, devoted man, not an intriguer, not a man to tomahawk a struggling, unbefriended brother. He was a poet, an admirable writer. He gave excellent articles week by week to the *Athenaeum*: he might have collected them and produced a book a year. But he didn't, and "Aylwin," the novel sneered at by Mrs. Atherton, was written twenty years before he published it.

As for the Swinburne talk, it is as well to have that clear. When Swinburne took up his quarters with Watts, his Dolores-Faustine phase was burned out. Had he gone to live in the Venusberg, instead of in Putney, he could not have revived it. But to say that he never wrote anything good after he took refuge with Watts is untrue, and betrays an ignorance of dates in the poet's life. Furthermore, Watts did not want to house Swinburne: that I have on the best authority possible. He had nothing to gain by having Swinburne in his house. Swinburne at that time could be nothing but a nuisance in an orderly house. Swinburne had to be taken care of lest worse befall, and Watts was the only man he could bear for long together. Watts finally yielded to the entreaties of Lady Jane Swinburne, the poet's mother, but on the condition that if Swinburne did not behave himself in the house he must go away. Watts did not undertake to "cure" Swinburne. Swinburne must do that himself, and proceeded to do so, and so ended his days in peace and quietness in the house of his friends, instead of in an hospital, or worse. That may be a disappointment to certain romantic souls who have nothing to pay for looking on, but that it was better for Swinburne no sensible person will deny. Were it better to be found swinging by the neck in a hopeless dawn, covered with snow, like Gerard de Nerval? To be stricken in the gutter like Poe? Or like Verlaine, to lie unaided for hours on the floor of a miserable lodging, and endure the shrill reproaches of a harridan?

There is a good dose of snobbery in the attacks on Theodore Watts. If he had housed Swinburne in Warwick Castle, or in Fingal's cave, or even in Rossetti's house in Chelsea, nothing would be said. But Putney! Where the Putney bus goes! Vulgarity of vulgarities! Lower and lower Middle-class! The singer of Hell in a back drawing-room! Zounds and damnation!

I have now done the best I can with Mrs. Atherton's book. There are some blunders of fact, but on the whole it is credible and creditable, and as interesting as any of her novels. Her opportunities of observation have been great: she has generally made good use of them. What has been written here by no means covers the book. A good deal has been neglected, such, for instance, as her activities during the war. The story of her decoration by the French Government is quite amazing. She does not seem to like the French. She has spent much time in Germany. However, she engaged in French war-work long before her own country entered the war, not, it would seem, from conviction, but because some fashionable friends were engaged in the same pursuits. When she was offered the *Legion d'Honneur* she accepted, and wrote at the same time to M. Jusserand, the

French ambassador in Washington, that the one way to be distinguished was *not* to be decorated by the French. Thereupon the ambassador put an end to the decoration for the time being, but she eventually got it. I have seen strange things in the French decoration of Americans, and I have seen too real friends of France who did useful work during the war quite neglected ; but that a woman who wrote to the French ambassador a letter insulting France should receive from the French Government the highest honour in its power to give, beats all.

It remains only to remark that these *Adventures of a Novelist* are no more memoirs of an artist than those of the first major-general or movie star who comes along. There is no sign of interest in art or discussion of art problems ; there is no inner life at all. By its entirely worldly and shrewd, sagacious tone, its low latitudes, an impression it leaves of heartlessness and thorough self-confidence, the book recalls the equally entertaining memoirs of Mrs. Langtry. Naturally it reveals powers of giving effect to thoughts, a technical skill in arrangement, of which there is no trace in Mrs. Langtry's volume. It is very possible, and not uncommon, to have a poor understanding combined with fine talents. Mrs. Langtry had talents of various kinds ; of true understanding she gave little sign : but the American has both. It is the Corinthian tone, an obvious predilection for the Hollywood view of life at its glossiest, the same scale of values, a race-course crowd's admiration for success and loud fame and the dwellers in golden houses, which bring the memoirs of these two remarkable women together. Neither reveals anything essential about her real self ; one can only infer that from the anecdotes. I leave the pleasure of drawing the inferences to some one else.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

By M. J. MacManus.

JOHN BUNYAN.

A. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WORKS OF JOHN BUNYAN. By Frank Mott Harrison. (Oxford University Press, printed for the Bibliographical Society.)

It is a matter for surprise that a bibliography of Bunyan, with claims towards completeness, should not have appeared until now. But a good thing is always worth even a long wait, and let it be said at once that Mr. Harrison's work is excellent. Additions there may, and probably will be, but the bibliography as a whole is not likely to be superseded.

To those who know Bunyan's work only through *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War*, and, perhaps, *Grace Abounding*, it will be something of a discovery to find no less than sixty-four titles of Bunyan authorship definitely listed by Mr. Harrison, as well as sixteen supposititious works. The rarity of many of them in first editions is excessive. Some are known by one or two copies only: of others not a single copy appears to have survived, and the compiler has had to get his information either from contemporary advertisements or from a later edition. This rarity is partly explained by two disastrous fires: the first, the Great Fire of London, which destroyed the warehouses containing the ungathered sheets of the works published before 1666; the second, the fire in a London sale-room in 1865, which destroyed the greater portion of the finest collection of Bunyan rareties ever brought together—that of Mr. George Offor. The other reason why early editions are of infrequent occurrence lies of course in Bunyan's popularity as a writer with readers of his own day; his books were literally read to pieces.

It is rather a pity, I think, that for reasons of space it was not found possible to give an extensive record of the early editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in this work. It has been done elsewhere, it is true, by Professor Wharey in the Clarendon Press edition of the book itself but in a definitive bibliography of this sort it is a regrettable omission. A list of the early Dublin editions alone would make very interesting reading; they are extraordinarily elusive.

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EDGAR ALLAN POE.

A CENSUS OF FIRST EDITIONS AND SOURCE MATERIALS BY EDGAR ALLAN POE IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS. By Charles F. Heartman and Kenneth Rede. (240 Copies printed for the Editor of *The American Book Collector*, Metuchen, New Jersey, 1932.)

The bibliography of Poe is a short one, as these two neat little duodecimo volumes suggest, but its importance is to be estimated from the fact that it represents a record of the earliest appearances of the writings of America's

greatest literary figure. The work of Messrs. Heartman and Rede, however, is not so much a bibliography as the groundwork of one.

The first volume is devoted to first editions of Poe's published works which appeared during his lifetime—or rather between the years 1827 and 1850. They number fifteen all told, beginning with the excessively rare *Tamerlane*, issued at Boston in 1827, and ending with the *Works*, published at New York in 1850. It is of interest to learn that of the forty copies of *Tamerlane* believed to have been originally printed, nine, according to the present census, are known to have survived. Even rarer than the excessively rare *Tamerlane* are the three single-sheet quarto broadsides, the *New York Sun* "Extra," April 13, 1844, entirely written by Poe, and the Prospectuses of *The Stylus*, "a monthly Journal of Literature. . . to be edited by Edgar Allan Poe." Of these only one copy each is recorded.

The second volume consists of a list of Poe's contributions to Annuals and Periodicals. Of these no less than fifty-two titles are given, all of which are American publications. In a bibliographical check-list there is no room, naturally, for detailed explanations, a fact which makes one entry somewhat puzzling. Poe's tale, *The Sphinx*, is stated to have appeared in *The American Keepsake*, edited by Anna Wilmot, in 1851, and the compiler's remark that "it has been thought that Miss Wilmot had access to Poe's MS., even if Poe did not arrange the publication himself." In view of the fact that Poe died in 1849 the latter part of this statement needs some elucidation.

In a third volume, not yet to hand, a list of Poe autograph letters and manuscripts will be given. This will complete a remarkable census which will be assured of a cordial welcome from collectors on both sides of the Atlantic.

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IRISH PRINTERS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

IRISH PRINTERS, BOOKSELLERS AND STATIONERS, 1726-1775. By E. R. McC. Dix. (London. The Bibliographical Society.)

This slim quarto volume is a separate printing of the Irish portion of *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1726 to 1775*, and it is a matter for congratulation to all concerned that it has been entrusted to the hands of one who has made the subject all his own—Mr. E. R. McC. Dix. The list is both comprehensive and informative, and reveals at every turn Mr. Dix's amazing knowledge of early Irish printers and printing. Here is a specimen entry :

Proctor (Ephraim). Printer in Athlone, 1774-93. The first printer in Athlone and the Publisher of the first Journal appearing in this town, the *Athlone Chronicle*. This is known mainly from his Crown Bond, dated 1774 (since lost in the destruction of the Public Records Office, Dublin, in June, 1922). He may have started work prior to this year, possibly in 1770. He lived and worked in Athlone for many years. One copy only of his *Athlone Chronicle* exists, that for July 12-16, 1788. It is in Lord Iveagh's Library at Farnleigh, Co. Dublin, and is No. 56 of Vol. 19. Proctor executed another Crown Bond in this year, 1788, in connection with this Journal. Nothing

else from his press is known. An "Ephraim Proctor" (or Procter) was married in 1764 to Alice Harrison.

One has only to mention that there are over 350 entries such as this, many of them packed with first-hand information, to indicate how huge a task Mr. Dix has undertaken and how competently he has carried it through.

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THE AMERICAN BOOK COLLECTOR.

The two numbers of *The American Book Collector* to hand—those for May and August of the present year—are so full of interesting and well-written articles that it is a matter for regret that the two intervening numbers—those for June and July—have not arrived. The titles of a few of the contributions will indicate the scope and variety of this very entertaining bibliographical magazine: "Books Bound in Human Skin," by W. H. Blumenthal; "German Private Presses," by Herbert Reichner; "Twentieth Century Americans," by Barton Currie; "An Amy Lovell Visit," by Gertrude Hills. The best article in the May number is on "Book Collecting Blind Alleys," by Percy H. Muir, in which he clearly and skilfully maps out a road for collectors of modern books and warns them of the folly of forming collections as a result of reading about books instead of reading the books themselves. In the August number, the editor, Mr. Charles F. Heartman, writes revealingly, from the depths of a long experience, about the pleasures, the humours and the hazards of the auction rooms.

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BOOKSELLERS' CATALOGUES.

Lack of space prevents anything more than a passing reference to two most interesting book lists to hand.

The first of these is the thirty-sixth Catalogue of Mr. Arthur Rogers (of 4 Queen's Square, Newcastle-on-Tyne). This well-known North Country bookseller is steadily acquiring a reputation as a discoverer of rare and out-of-the-way books, and his lively and sometimes piquant notes always make interesting reading. Amongst the many fine things in this list one may mention the rare second edition of Boswell's only novel, *Dorando* (1767); a hitherto unrecorded book by Conan Doyle, *Ghost Stories and Presentiments* (1888); and a complete set of the *British Magazine* (1760-67), in which Smollett's *Sir Lancelot Greaves* first appeared in serial form.

Mr. Rota (of 76A Davies Street, London, W.1), in Catalogue No. 25, offers for sale the personal library of "John Gawsworth" (Mr. T. Fytton Armstrong), comprising a most interesting range of books by modern authors, the majority of which are association copies. When it is stated that the authors who figure here include such names as Edmund Blunden, Thomas Burke, Siegfried Sassoon, A. E. Coppard, Walter de la Mare, Arthur Machen and M. P. Shiel, and that the average price of the items offered works out at about ten shillings a volume, no further inducement should be necessary to impel the collector of modern books to secure a copy of Mr. Rota's list without delay.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CITY WITHOUT WALLS. An Anthology setting forth the Drama of Human Life. Arranged by Margaret Cushing Osgood. Jonathan Cape. 15s.

For many years I had the idea of compiling an Anthology from the sacred and half-sacred literatures of the world, so that those who read might be released from the confining notion of truth in one Scripture only, and come to know to what harmony of vision came the seers who, in India, China, Palestine, Egypt, Greece or Arabia, turned their thoughts to the Oversoul. I had gathered here and there from my reading the wisdom of those seers upon creation, life, death, conduct, immortality and the heaven-world. But, when I read *The City without Walls*, I knew there was no need to continue this labour, for the compiler of this Anthology had, in a mood akin to my own, ransacked the Scriptures, Christian, Buddhist, Brahmin, Chinese, Egyptian for their profundities and exaltations, and also a wide range of secular literature where it becomes half-sacred because the intensity of the soul has burned away for a time its dross, and there is a transparency through which there comes some transience of the Everlasting Light. In a long life Mrs. Osgood has gathered together these precious fires, now burning as the soul came nigh to heaven, or again as it looked on the loveliness of earth, or in love or in sorrow found some star of leading which if followed might lead the soul to the mystic Jerusalem. I do not know of any better book to dispel, without controversy, the arrogance of ignorance and the spiritual bad manners of those who speak about the heathen and the pagan of whose lives they know nothing, and whose wisdom they have never read, but who condemn them, nevertheless, a custom which is very common in Ireland, more so than elsewhere, because our people read so little, but have that arrogant confidence of ignorance that the most unread Christian Irishman is nearer to divine truth than Plato or Plotinus or Hermes or Laotze or Buddha or Vyassa or Sankara or the rapt god-intoxicated Sufi seers. How great a vision is born from the reading of this book, a vision of innumerable ladders reaching up to the heavens, and of innumerable descents of the spirit. The Communion of Saints is enlarged for us and St. Francis walks hand in hand with Akhnaton, and St. Teresa is one in her ecstasy with Kabir, and hundreds that the vulgar mind had placed as far apart as Heaven and Hell are here found speaking so harmoniously together that we divine their wisdom comes from one fountain. This is the special virtue of the Anthology that it liberates and enlarges the soul, and shows a shining host of friends where before it had thought there was only a malign darkness.

The reader will find much heavenly and much lovely human wisdom within the pages of this book. It is not to be read through at one sitting, but is to be taken up and closed again when one has found a starry thought which we can walk away with and make our own, and then the pages can be opened once more. Good thinking and wisdom come from taking one thought at a time as the Japanese bring out one picture and let its beauty be before their eyes for days ere another picture is brought out and displayed. There is material in the Anthology for a rich spiritual culture. I hope it will be bought by many so that it may lie easily to the hand for the wisdom in it is of the kind that can easily be carried in the memory, and there is no other wisdom that can be of any service to us.

A.E.

TRANSVALUATIONS. By J. Redwood Anderson. (Oxford University Press. Humphrey Milford. 6s. net.)

"Transvaluations" is by no means J. Redwood Anderson's first book of poems. He has a number of others at his back, all awaiting their merited appreciation and strong praise. Redwood Anderson, although so little known to the public, is one of our greatest living poets and technicians. He combines considerable originality with effective traditionalism, and is, I think, of all English writing poets, present and gone, nearest to Milton as a verbal organist. That is the prominent feature which detaches itself from the mere eye quality of Redwood Anderson's verse. To rightly appreciate him, to glow to him, you must needs read him aloud, sonorously, in great gushes, half a page, one page, two pages, without halt or hesitation, observing all the finest arts of the elocutionist. In a sense he is a platform poet, but a platform poet of a very radiant and remarkable elevation, his rhetoric throbbing with imagination, profound thought, and all that sensitiveness of perception which distinguishes the real poet from the mere competent versifier. Perhaps it would be fairer to call him a cathedral poet (one of the explanations, I think, for the public's neglect of him), his instrument an organ rather than a harp, his note one of stately solemnity rather than of lyrical abandon—a note that is out of date, but made new and alive in Redwood Anderson's alcove:

And the wind blew
Through all the winter of the Boreal night :
and the wind wailed
above the Arctic stark paralysis
that roofed in death the living sea's abyss ;
and the wind failed,
for all its terror, all its might,
all its splendour and its love,
for all its trumpet-majesties,
to move
one tittle of compacted ice
or wake one ripple on that rigid sea.

But he can play equally finely on the lighter treble notes, turning from contemplation of an ocean, a soul's agony or the vastness of night to a green field or gladed wood :

Through the green underbrush
there went no rush
of wings,
no minim creep of wingless things ;

* * * *

No grass-head nodded, not a Bell
nor delicate Campion stirred ;
the nebular-ball of Dandelion stood
immutable and not a star-seed fell ;
while silence laid her passive finger-tips
upon the lips
of all the million leaves of all the wood.

Sometimes his experiences may seem a little remote even from the experiences of the most hypersensitive, for there is in Redwood Anderson something strangely lonely and aloof ; but this very aloofness helps to equip him at moments with unusual power and insight, as in his remarkably revealing and daring poem "Gethsemane" where he describes Christ's agony in the Garden and tells us how He bore the sins of the world.

The worst one can say of Redwood Anderson is that he occasionally writes a painfully inflated and unnatural line at the end of a fine passage (As: "O Life! O more than Life! cried Icarus."), that he is insufficiently conscious of the strength that lies in economy (for he tends to over-write), that occasionally he is strained, and that his long, lissom starkness is apt to grow monotonous.

Yet though he does not specialize in couplets and phrases, he can beat many of his contemporaries at that incandescent game, startling us every now and again with some fine brief rightness of language, as :

. The Great Night
Denier and dark Witness of the Sun.

Or :

And the sea moaned :
cried with its mouths of ebony.

Or he can take a stock sentence out of ancient poetry and revitalize it by means of cunning rhythm and rhyme :

And the wind blows
whither it lists ; and no man knows
whence, nor when, nor how it comes—nor whither the wind goes.

Last, but not least, he is a great narrative poet, and of a new and original kind. The Future should revere him among the giants of narrative poetry, and I think will hardly notice the few dingy and unfaithful constellations that have got into the tapestry of his vast starlit beauty. HERBERT E. PALMER.

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A NOTE ON PEASANT DRAMA.

MICHAELMAS EVE : A Play in Three Acts. By T. C. Murray. London : George Allen & Unwin. 3s. 6d. net.

The triumphant return of Mr. Murray to his earlier manner in this fine play affords food for reflection on the present confused policy of the Abbey Theatre. There has been such sure quality in Mr. Murray's work from the beginning that it, in its strength, might have been relied upon to withstand even the brunt of assaults from within. But even he has been forced for a reason to move, as it were, with the times, and, I think, slightly to the detriment of his reputation. His last two full-length plays, *The Blind Wolf* and *A Flutter of Wings*, belong to this period when the good sense and the safe guidance of earlier Abbey standards

would seem, for the time being, to have been suspended. And, one may ask, in obedience to what demand? Was it from the public, or did the Directors decide upon the necessity for this hiatus amongst themselves? Surely there must have been some reason for the notion which arose that the peasant play was to be considered a thing of the past and that nothing further worth while could come from that source. It seemed to be expected of the Irish dramatist, if he hoped to have his play produced, that he should write about far countries, or upon certain supposedly cosmopolitan aspects of Dublin, or about any other kind of life than that he best knew.

Mr. Lennox Robinson became the chief advocate and, at the same time, the least successful practitioner of this new, experimental school of Abbey Drama. It never became more than an experiment. Mr. Robinson's efforts did not pass beyond the Abbey and reach success upon the English stage, a hope for which they would seem to have been designed, and he was himself forced to return to the peasant, although a somewhat superficial peasant in the *Far-Off Hills*, which, as everyone knows, was made the mainstay of the recent tour of the Abbey Company in America.

I have gone to some pains to discover just when or why this abandonment of the earlier sound principles governing acceptance of plays for the Abbey arose, and, as often happens in the course of such investigation, light fell from an unexpected quarter. It came to me about six years ago in the foyer of the Abbey Theatre out of a conversation with a distinguished public servant.

He said to me of some play, out of the life he best knew, just then being performed :

"Ah, yes, this kind of thing is all very well, but we know all that; why don't you fellows write about other aspects of Irish life, us, for example?"

My answer to this, ventured timidly enough seemed to me to have had something in it when I thought about it afterwards :

"I think, sir, it is perhaps just a little too soon. The resources of the Irish peasant are not yet exhausted."

And now Mr. Murray comes once more to prove that, after many vague experiments by the Abbey Directors and much loss of time, the peasant play still stands stoutly as the backbone of the Theatre in Ireland. It is what the Irish people want at the Abbey Theatre; it is what visitors to our shores go there to see; it is what our players know best how to perform.

Those who have seen the wholly excellent performances of this new peasant tragedy at the Abbey will be glad to have the play in book form, with a striking portrait of the author by Sean O'Sullivan, R.H.A. to enhance the pleasure of the volume. The play, as a contribution to dramatic literature, gets over, as the actors say, as well from the printed page as from the boards.

If one has any quarrel with Mr. Murray it is perhaps because he seems inclined slightly to limit his great gifts as a writer of tragic drama by some of the inhibitions which dominate the material in which he works. It would seem, as in the present case, that sometimes, after splendid preparation, he burkes the

issue and denies the benefit of the *katharsis* to his endings. He would answer, perhaps, that in doing so he remains more true to Irish life as he sees it and maybe he would be right. For, in spite of his way of doing it, his plays all have moving and powerful last acts.

Michaelmas Eve now takes its place with four of the best tragedies the Abbey Theatre has given us in, I would say, the following order: *Birthright*, *Maurice Harte*, *Michaelmas Eve*, *Autumn Fire*.

B. M.

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FAREWELL MY MUSE.—Clifford Bax. Lovat Dickson, pp. 203. 8s. 6d.

In a rather sour preface to his collected verse, Mr. Bax is I think unduly pessimistic about the future of verse-writing. Good verse will be written always since it is the aptest, perhaps the only, mould for a certain and rare form of experience; that it will have readers is as certain as a sun has satellites and the moon her number of watery reflections. That the verse form has declined in public taste in favour of the novel proves nothing except the commonsense of our generation in stripping the Psyche of the prosy loads forced on her by the later centuries and thus leaving her light for the lyric flights that are her peculiar function.

As the good poet only may now survive, I am not surprised at the ill-success of Mr. Bax's former poetic ventures. There is a careful craftsmanship, certainly, in all the work, but little of the wing. Most of it is a polished mosaic of fine phrasing; in fact, in all of "The Traveller's Tale"—which is a long episodic poem and a fine subject for epic treatment had inspiration and not mere invention answered his call—his ideas and I think his philosophy are a mere chorus to local colour, with the light just a little lurid. He is somewhat luckier in the "Songs from Plays," and here, curiously enough, the rhymes he forswears in his preface are the brightest clinches of his art. His slender talent fits middling well in olden honey forms where a little oversweetness is never amiss. If he extracts—as he says Irish Authors do extract "by virtue of charming personality"—a gallon of reputation from a pint-pot of achievement he won't do too badly. I doubt, however, if the achievements collected here would brim an even smaller measure.

P. F.

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SCOTS UNBOUND. By Hugh MacDiarmid. Eneas Mackay, Stirling. Edition limited to 350 signed copies. 10s. 6d. each.

Mr. Hugh MacDiarmid has long been recognised as the poet of Scottish Nationalism. His best-known work, "A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle," proved to be no easy subject for the ordinary reviewer unfamiliar with the Scots

vernacular. Since the publication of that volume, however, the poet has delved still further into the recesses of dialect, so that his new book of poems, "Scots Unbound," simply bristles with difficulties. Without being familiar, in every instance, with the exact significance of the Scots words, it must be admitted that most of them appear to fit more closely to the texture of the meaning than what might be supposed to be their English equivalents. Mr. MacDiarmid seems to have pushed the vernacular to its limits of expression in two poems, "Water Music" and "Scots Unbound." The first is a magnificent tour-de-force on the rivers of Scotland, apparently suggested by some of Mr. Joyce's recent work. In the second he seeks to justify the vernacular:—

"English is owre cauld-casten-to
"The thochts that Scotland should gar us brew."

Mr. MacDiarmid's scheme of poetry would embrace not only Scottish Nationalism, but the most advanced intellectual and revolutionary movements as well. He will have nothing to do with "fetishes o' fame," and claims that:—

"The psyche's the right to revolution tae
"And canna hae owre muckle o't."

It may be so. In the meantime, those of us who do not feel that we can celebrate whole-heartedly the nuptials of poetry and super-intellectualism may still rejoice with the poet of "Scots Unbound" in the flashes of beauty, such as his "Milk-wort and Bog Cotton," which he still manages to evoke from the earlier and less elaborate convention.

R.

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POEMS. By Mary Studd. The Talbot Press. 3s. 6d. net.

This volume is the work of an Irishwoman come of a family of poets and lovers of Ireland: for Mrs. Studd was a niece of Aubrey de Vere and granddaughter of the Wordsworthian poet, Sir Aubrey de Vere, of Curragh Chase, near Limerick. Her own home where many of these lyrics were written was nearby Coole Park on "Galway rock or plain." There are some seventy poems here, some of them printed in the author's lifetime, and with dates of the last fifty years. Their themes are the dream of beauty, the striving after the infinite, the desire for happiness, the effort towards the truth by way of faith—many of the best things in the volume, such as *Joy*, *The Garden of the Soul*, *To Nature*, are expressions of religious feeling. The poems are not all of equal merit, some might have been subjected to more choice and correction, but they are never prosaic or merely literary, and almost in all will be found an individual thought, imaginative or sometimes humorous: it is the happy impression and satisfaction of her readers that Mrs. Studd's song was truly composed not on paper but in the inner spirit.

J. M. H.

CLAUDE COLLEER ABBOTT : *Early Mediaeval French Lyrics*. London : Constable & Co., Ltd. 1932. pp. xxiii + 242.

I should wish to be able like Miss Agnes Mure Mackenzie, in the *New Statesman* of November 12th, to praise this book unreservedly. But it is not, except perhaps in scholarship, of the quality of Miss Waddell's anthology of Mediaeval Latin verse. I am glad that an adequate selection of old French lyrics has been made available for English readers, although it seems to me rather cavalier treatment of the Provençal lyric to include any one example. But I cannot go as far as Miss Mackenzie in extolling Professor Abbott's renderings as nearly always in the same metre as the original and as "nearly always astonishingly close both to the literal sense and to the quality of the emotion." No. 30, for example is not translated in the same metre as the original. A 55 trochaic decasyllable is rendered by the English iambic decasyllable. In No. 36 the "lyric caesura" of some of the lines is not taken into account. No. 55 has, in each stanza, the first two lines in the 54 nine-syllable metre, but Professor Abbott renders them by an English octosyllabic line. Why is the iambic octosyllable of No. 6 rendered by a trochaic line (*Bitter wage for it receiving*)? The 75 and 57 lines of No. 33 are rendered by ordinary iambic decasyllables. The 55 lines at the beginning of each stanza of No. 58 suffer the same treatment. As for the accuracy of the translations, while these are indeed usually as near as the exigencies of metre and rime permit, there are some mistakes, and very many inaccuracies due to the necessities of the verse rendering. In No. 5 *A tor françois* does not mean "as their bodies teach." In No. 7 why *fat* for the correct *falt*? In No. 8 :

Ke mes amis revegne ainz la vespree
does not mean

Ere evening send back my love to me.

In No. 35 :

C'onke tant nen aimait Paris Helainne
does not mean

Not Paris more desired enchant Hélène.

In No. 50 does *musairs* mean "lovers"?

In No. 47 "fear me not, nor more" adds gratuitously to the sense of *si ne t'esmaie mie*.

In No. 63 v *sonet* is wrongly rendered "sonnet."

In No. 69 *contratendot* does not mean "sweet answers sent."

I could go on indefinitely. The translations are, with very few exceptions neither literally accurate, as prose versions might be at the hands of a scholar like Professor Abbott, nor poetic renderings of value in themselves and close "to the quality of the emotion."

The translation of the only Provençal example is quite inadequate. It is true that only a great poet could give to a version in English of the greatest of Provençal lyrics the passion and intensity, the compression and delicacy of the original. But such stuff as :

Gracious the lady is and debonaire,
For her beauty a many look at her,
And in her heart is loyal love astir,

is beneath the level of even our weekly press. It is an abominable lapse to render
Aval els pratz on chantols auzellos.

by such tosh as :

Within the meads where pretty song-birds fly.
Also, *tot o fassam* does not mean "we will do all" but "let us do all this."
Miss Waddell could not have been guilty of such "lése-poésie !"

T. B. RUDMOSE-BROWN.

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ERNEST GRANGER : *La France*. Pp. 433. Paris : A. Fayard et Cie, n.d. (1932). 25fr.

The most regrettable feature of this excellent book is the treatment of the *langue d'oc* (or *provençal*) as a mere dialect on a parity with "tous nos autres parlers locaux," and the author's scornful rejection of the plea that the language of the South of France should be taught in the schools of the South (no one has ever suggested that it should be taught in the schools of the North, as the words of the author on p. 210 would lead the reader to suppose). The French hatred of the *langue d'oc*, as usual, covers a supercilious contempt for whatever is not "French" : M. Granger would treat Provençal as Mr. Punch treats Irish (or Erse, as he would call it, delighting in the ambiguous sound of this appellation). M. Granger should know that the *langue d'oc* is a language which stands, linguistically, on an equal footing with French, Spanish and Italian. Its many dialects are dialects of *langue d'oc*, not of French. M. Granger, as his summary tables show, does not know, or wilfully ignores, the distinction between the United Kingdom and the Irish Free State. Another blot on the book is the map of the French railways (p. 344-5). The line from Arvant to Neussargues is marked as a principal line, whereas the express trains from Paris P.L.M. to Beziers pass by Brioude, St. Flour, and there are only local trains on the Arvant Neussargues branch. The main line to Clermont Ferrand *via* Vichy is not marked at all beyond Vichy (the name Vichy does not appear).

R. B.

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WAR AGAIN TO-MORROW. By Ludwig Bauer. Translated by W. Horsfall Carter. London : Faber & Faber, Limited, 24 Russell Square.

An essay in book-form, the title of which proclaims its thesis, written by a student of contemporary politics who describes himself as 'one who loves his fellow-men but does not esteem them, . . . and has learnt from history one

lesson only, that it teaches us nothing.' All the chief factors counted on to prevent another catastrophe, the League of Nations, Disarmament, the Pacifist movement, the Church, the 'Pink International,' the 'Golden International,' Jewry, America, *vis inertiae*, the tendency inborn in man to cling to what is, rather than to risk himself and his all on new ventures, are examined in turn and shown to be inadequate to the task; not one of them, nor even any or all of them taken together, Dr. Bauer thinks, will avail to save us. Italian fascism, too, and 'Americanism' have already proved hollow shams, neither England nor the United States are so safe from internal collapse as they think. The list of dangers confronting our civilisation, on the other hand, looks terrifying indeed; Russian Bolshevism, too powerful already to be crushed from outside, seems destined to destroy Western capitalism as soon as the standard of life of the Russian worker is seen to be higher than that of the European proletarian; Asia, incalculable and mysterious, is stirring in her sleep; youth, contemptuous of its elders and ready for adventure as never before, is ripe for revolution. Greatest of all, however, in the author's opinion, is the German danger. The crazy new ultra-nationalism now prevailing East of the Rhine, repudiating responsibility for the last world war, clamouring for a 'revision' of the Treaty of Versailles even though any attempt at this time of day to re-draw the map of Europe must result in new strife, denouncing 'tribute-payments' and shouting forth the claims of *Deutschtum* in blind defiance both of international law and of common sense ('Whatever is German belongs to us!') represents the core of the problem; its treatment and the striking analysis of the German national character which accompanies it constitutes perhaps the most interesting part of Dr. Bauer's work. Our prospects then are bad indeed; only the establishment of a super-state, followed by universal disarmament, and the elimination of the present economic anarchy by a system of planned economy can save us. The likelihood of these remedies being adopted, however, would appear to be small.

Readers inclined to melancholy and those who prefer cheerful reading will do well to leave this book alone. The hardened should find it stimulating and thought-provoking as well as instructive; they will probably forgive the author for his occasional lapses into colloquialisms of a kind that is apt to jar on the purist. The translation, made by one of the best-known English authorities on modern Germany, deserves high praise.

M. F. L.

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THREE PLAYS. "I LIVED WITH YOU, AND TWO OTHER PLAYS." By Ivor Novello. London: Methuen. 8s. 6d. net.

The name of Ivor Novello is familiar to everyone who is interested in the theatre. He is at the same time one of London's leading actors and a playwright who has proven his ability to attract and hold large audiences. That he is not in the first flight of British dramatists no one will deny, yet he can certainly handle a substantial theme with dexterity and clothe it with entertaining dialogue. That he is also a composer and one of the darlings of film 'fans' is also, perhaps, to his credit.

In this volume are collected three plays which have been successfully produced in London, two of them this year. *I Lived With You* shows how a penniless Russian Prince found the snobbery of a London suburban family exactly suited to his material and spiritual needs. He used his sense of satire to bring its members to a more human condition, and in the process provides an entertainment that is above the average. *Party* is another effort in satire which is thoroughly entertaining without in any way stirring either the emotions or the intellect. *Symphony in Two Flats* has had its day, it was produced in 1929, and the author has certainly made progress since then. "If he will give himself his due," says Mr. 'Eddie' Marsh in his introduction, "and put his main reliance on those among his many gifts which distinguish the dramatist from the entertainer, he will surely win a high place in the theatre of his time, and perhaps write a play which will survive it." It may be so, but there is nothing in this volume to indicate that Mr. Novello has anything beyond the talent of a good popular entertainer. The three plays in this volume are certainly much better on the stage than on the page and it was, perhaps, better that they should have been left in the theatre to which they undoubtedly belong. A. E. M.

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THE JEWS. "ISRAEL: FROM ITS BEGINNINGS TO THE MIDDLE OF THE 8TH CENTURY." By Adolphe Lods. London: Kegan Paul. 25s. net.

The History of Civilisation which Messrs. Kegan Paul are issuing in its English dress is probably the most valuable addition to history that has been made during recent years, and this volume by Dr. Lods, a Professor at the Sorbonne, is an extremely valuable addition to a valuable series.

It is not the purpose of Dr. Lods to dwell upon the unexpected development when the prophets "made their protest against the narrowness and poverty of a purely national religion," and Professor Lods clears the way for the next stage of the story.

"It is hard to say with any certainty," says the learned author, "who Moses was and what he did." That Moses was not merely a mythical or legendary personage he is certain, and he attempts to show how Moses "by reason of his personal ascendancy, by reason of the solidarity created by a long series of trials and successes shared in common, above all, by reason of the close tie which the worship of the God who had delivered them had created between the confederated tribes" made a people. Dr. Lods says that the work of Moses was "the creation of a people by the founding of a national religion," but it may be that there is something more to be said about the historical value of the Mosaic narratives.

David is portrayed as one who flourished in an age the "level of which was still almost wholly material and naively selfish," but who nevertheless was a man of chivalry as well as cunning, of tenderness as well as cruelty. He was "Poet, musician, orator of persuasive eloquence, he cast the spell of his charm upon all who came in contact with him. . . . It was he who made Israel into a powerful state." The story abounds in colourful and powerful personalities, and it is a creditable feature of Dr. Lods' work that none of the colour is lost. There is energy and enthusiasm in the story, and if it occasionally suggests com-

parisons with contemporary events that is merely an additional reason why the book should be studied. It will probably annoy the orthodox by times, but on the whole the author is to be congratulated upon a splendid piece of work, a work that makes one look forward longingly for the next volume which will continue the story. The book falls naturally into place in a great scheme, and is itself fascinating.

L. P. B.

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AN ENGLISH RADICAL: JAMES STANSFELD. By J. L. and B. Hammond. London: Longmans. 15s.

John Bright is still a name to conjure with in England but the companions of his Radical days are now hardly names to the populace. Forster is known in Ireland because of his 'buckshot' nickname, and James Stansfeld has been forgotten by everyone. But his work deserves to be remembered, even if it be nowadays regarded as nothing better than mild Liberalism. For that reason all who take an interest in the development of social reform will be grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Hammond for the admirable study which they have published. It is a delightful evocation of a bygone time.

James Stansfeld was a Yorkshireman who was born in 1820. He failed at the Bar, but was a success in Parliament from his entry. He became the close friend of Mazzini, and was suspect by many for his close adherence to the Italian programme of 1848; he was associated with Garibaldi's visit to England in 1864 and had to resign his post in Palmerston's Government for his connection with an alleged Italian conspirator. His greatest achievement was the organisation of the Local Government Board in Gladstone's Ministry of 1868-74, and his subsequent valiant fight for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act, which earned for him the title of "a Victorian champion of sex equality." His connection with Irish affairs brought him to the Home Rule side, and he took Joseph Chamberlain's place in Gladstone's 1886 Cabinet. He was not easy about Ulster, however, and he warned Gladstone of possible trouble there. "I entertain the opinion," he wrote, "that they should not be *compelled* into the new arrangements, and that not the slightest risk should be taken of having to use force against them."

This excellent study of a most interesting man should do much to bring his name once more into prominence, as James Stansfeld was one of those who did a great deal to bring about long-delayed social reforms in England. All who take an interest in the history of social reform will be compelled to have this book in their library, and those who know how delightful is the writing of Mr. and Mrs. Hammond will hasten to read it. The book is much more attractive than most novels, and more comprehensive than mere biography; it is social history in its most charming dress.

L. P. B.

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WILLIAM OF ORANGE. By G. J. Renier, Ph. D. Peter Davies, Ltd., London. 5s. net.

The author was very unwise in prefacing this book with a "Foreword" beginning: "Some readers must be warned against this book: it contains views that are not fashionable." The reader who is led by these words to expect

something startling, or at least unconventional, will remember them with resentment when he finds nothing of the kind in the book, but a piece of ponderous political history in which William's general policy is justified. Surely there is nothing "unfashionable" in this!

This book does not enable us to understand William the man better. It casts little fresh light upon the circumstances of his life nor the Holland in which he grew up and lived. Personal details about William himself occupy only a few pages. The rest consists chiefly of an account of the complications of Dutch and English politics of the period which may be of value to a specialised historical researcher, but is dreary and unenlightening to the general reader. The style reminds us of the historical works of our school days in which countries were personified and history treated as a series of moves on an international chess-board. "France" did this and "Spain" did that.

The author admires William as a champion of Protestantism, and approves heartily of his policy, but writes with candour and moderation. Had he shown more enthusiasm the work might be less reliable as history, but it would probably be more readable.

P. B.

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LARK ASCENDING. By Mazo De La Roche. Macmillan, pp. 303. 7s. 6d.

LITTLE COMFORT. By George Manning-Saunders. Grayson, pp. 320. 7s 6d.

QUEER STREET. By Edward Shanks. Macmillan, pp. 680. 10s. 6d.

Although the chief character in Mazo De La Roche's story was by occupation a confectioner in a dead little village in Massachusetts, she was really a Prima Donna at heart. She had, in fact, if not the art, the artistic temperament. She had, too, that lifemaking quality of the artist that is called variously, according to success or non-success, the urge to self-expression or supreme selfishness. How this led her to sell her business and cruise the Mediterranean on the proceeds with her son until she found her proper sphere as a titled, but poor, lady of Sicily forms the theme of a very interesting novel in which there is much good writing and a strangely impressive quality of making unsatisfactory human relationships appear satisfactory. It is a well balanced story, picturesque in its detail and nicely shaded with local colour from both sides of the Atlantic.

Local colour too, this time from Cornwall, forms a pretty background to "Little Comfort." Mr. Manning-Saunders' tale, however, is the pilgrimage of an inhibited lover. There is a bullying father, an abortive love affair, a bible-mad, soulsnatching grandfather who tries to lead the hero's hurt spirit his own peculiar way to heaven, and a sensible, sensual little Jewess who saves the soul and the situation. There is a lazy wholesomeness about the narrative as refreshing as cool cider in an oaken inn when the sun is in the noon.

Mr. Shanks, on the other hand, deals with electric light and bright, winey young things. I suppose all phases of life are worth writing about seriously, even Nightclub life, though it is rather a task to suggest the depth by the bubbles. Mr. Shanks has done it as well as another with the assistance of Bedsittingrooms, the instalment system, high and low finance and economic crashes. All the characters—so many that most of them are more suggested than drawn—flutter

some time or another through the Bran Pie club. It is Mr. Shanks' stage light. Some come for amusement, some to exchange boredoms, some to see Life and most of them to hide from it: and all are a little fed-up. It is a careful book, well planned and well written, but reading it is to do Soho on Shanks' nightmare.

P. F.

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SKERRETT. By Liam O'Flaherty. London. Victor Gollancz, Ltd.

The Island of Nara, a dismal, storm-lashed fastness off the coast of Galway, was, many centuries ago, the resort of monks and hermits, traces of whose occupation may be found to this day. In 1887 it was the home of a race of peasants who snatched a precarious living from its scanty soil and the turbulent waters that surrounded its coast. Prominent among these were the characters of Mr. O'Flaherty's latest novel: Skerrett, the school teacher, Father Harry Moclair, Dr. Melia, and Ferris, the idealist. The interest of the book is primarily centred in the savage, uncouth, and aggressive personality of Skerrett, who was determined not only to be a law to himself, but also to impose his ideas on the primitive island community. In an atmosphere reeking with petty jealousy and intrigue, he spent a see-saw kind of existence, now buoyed up by the support of particular groups, and alternately plunged into despair by their defection. At length, beset on all sides by his enemies, and broken by a malevolent fate which seemed to pursue him, Skerrett passed to the grave by way of the asylum. Thirty years later his name had become a glorious legend in the island, while those of his enemies were passing into oblivion.

Nobody who is familiar with the life of the western peasants would agree that the qualities ascribed to them in this book represent the whole truth. It may be that the island of Nara is intended as a microcosm of a nation which has sometimes been accused of treating its leaders with ignominy during their lives, and glorifying them after their death. Whether that be so or not, this gloomy and sordid tale is undoubtedly the best that Mr. O'Flaherty has written. In atmosphere and treatment it is the very stuff of tragedy; the author has squeezed the last ounce of superfluity out of his prose, and attained to a Biblical vigour and intensity of expression which could hardly be equalled by any living writer.

R.

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NOT ALL JOY. Short Stories by Dermot Freyer. Elkin Mathews & Marrot, 7s. 6d. net. Also a special limited edition of 100 copies on hand-made paper, 21s. net.

We regret that we have had to hold over until our April issue a review of this important book by an Irish writer. Mr. Freyer needs no introduction to the readers of *The Dublin Magazine*, for some of his most exquisite writing has first appeared in its pages, but we would call the attention of collectors to the fact that the special edition of his new book is limited to one hundred copies,

and the wise bookman will secure one of these at once from the publisher, rather than wait until it comes to him deviously, at a later date, and at a much greater cost, through the agency of the booksellers' catalogues. Dermot Freyer's work is at last attracting some, at least, of the notice which it should have had long since, and we note with satisfaction, as we go to press, that a leading contemporary has hailed in this latest volume "a fine literary quality that comes out in an unfailing sensitive feeling for quietly beautiful prose," "an imagination that has both delicacy and depth."

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The first number of a new fortnightly Canadian magazine, the *Twentieth Century*, which is intended to review the progress of Literature, Art, Music, and the Drama in Canada, contains some interesting material. There is an article on "Prospects of the World Economic Conference," by G. D. H. Cole, and a very clear account by Mr. Ivor Thomas of the assaults recently made on the atom by Drs. Cockroft and Walton. The remaining articles and sketches, which are bright and varied, include a short play, "A Crock of Gold," adapted from a story which once appeared in the *Dublin Magazine*. The subscription is three dollars per year, and should be sent to Mr. Leslie Bishop, at 65 Avenue Road, Toronto, Canada.

R.